YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

volume 3

BY:
Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

Published by:
Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania
S.L.P. 20033
Dar es Salaam – Tanzania

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

PREFACE

This is the 3rd volume in this series contains answers to questions asked from January, 1972 to March, 1975. These questions cover a wide range of burning topics of modern times. The popularity of the 1st two volumes has convinced us of the usefulness of this venture; and the Mission hopes that this volume will be even more widely read.

These questions were received from correspondents residing in East Africa, UK, Europe, Canada, USA, Pakistan and India. We have omitted the names for obvious reason.

This series is published for the benefit of our Shia Ithna-aseri youths.

The Mission is grateful to Mr.Murtaza Bandali, Dar-es-Salaam, for his help in checking the proof and making useful suggestions.

S. SAEED AKHTAR RIZVI

Dar-es-Salaam
31st December, 1975.

Q1. WHOM DOES ISLAM BELONG TO?

Unlike Judaism that belongs to the Jews, and Christianity that belongs to Christians, Islam does NOT belong to Muslims but to the entire mankind. The follower of Islam are called Muslims just to distinguish them from non-followers and it does not mean that whatever has been said in the holy Quran – a guidance for mankind –is Exclusively meant for the muslims as is the prevalent misconception.

A. Islam has been sent to lead the whole mankind onto the right path. But it is wrong to say that it "belongs" to this or that person. It belongs to Allah. The muslims who follow Islam, do belong to Islam. Those who do not follow it are rebels having gone away from islam; and hence called Kafirs.

Also muslims are called are called "muslims" not to distinguish them from the non-Believers, but because they belong to islam. It is not a "negative" name, but a Positive one which means "one who accepts the Will of Allah and obeys His command."

Q2. SHIAS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

In the last issue of "The Light" (February,1972) I read an interesting topic of Shiite connection with early history of East Africa. Can you please give me the present condition of shia Ithna-'asharis in West, Central and South Africa?

A. There are very few Shias in South Africa. In Mozambique there are about 10 families. The number of the Shias in central and west Africa is as follows:-

Zaire	- 950	of Khoja Origin
Burundi	- 400	
Ruwanda	- 150	
Nigeria	- 4000	Arabs from Lebanon etc.

Note: Since these figures were written, most of the Ithna-asheri have left Nigeria and Zaire as a result of the decision of those governments not to allow non-citizens to work there.

Q3. WHY ARE SHIAS IN MINORITY?

Why we Shias are in minority in the world though ours is the true Islam. Is it because of (1) oppression to which we have been subjected soon after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) closed his eyes for all times to come, or (2) lack of Tabligh work or (3) Tragedy of Kerbala that we have become lethargic - Tragic aspect being stressed more and the practical aspect less.

A. When were the "people of truth" in majority? Give me one example. And for the benefits of the tragic aspect of the events of Karbala, see the answer to the question No. 98.

Q4: ALLAH IS ONE

Could you please give me one Ayat which proves oneness of God?

A. Read Surah Qul Huwallah, with its meaning:-
"Say, He is Allah, the One; Allah, the eternally Besought of all; He Begets not nor was He begotten; and there is none like unto Him."

Q5: WHERE IS GOD?

I was once asked by a Christian to prove the whereabouts of God and why do I follow the Islamic religion rather than Christianity?

A. God is everywhere by His Power; but not as a body. You should read "God of Islam" and "Prophethood" to give the full answer to your Christian friend. These books have been published by this Mission.

Q6: WHY PLURAL PRONOUNS FOR ALLAH?

Why sometimes Allah uses in the Qur'an the pronouns, I, ME, WE, US, MY and OURS?

A. You cannot have any objection about singular pronouns. The plural is used to denote His Greatness, Honour and Power. It is the usual custom in many languages.

Q7: WHO CAME FIRST?

Who was created first, man or animals?

A. Animals.

Q8: ANY OTHER ADAM?

Was there any other Adam or World before this world and Adam

A. According to the 'Ahadith' of Masumeen (a.s.), there have passed thousands of Adams before ours.

Q 9: WINGS OF THE ANGELS

“Praise to Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who appointeth the angels messengers having wings two, three an four”(Qur'an, 35:1) Explain the phrase "wings two, three and four".

A. We may suppose "two, three or four" to refer to the pairs of wings But it does not necessarily signify the precise number, rather it means "many wings", because in 'Ahadith' we find mention of angels with hundreds of wings; and also there are angels with just one pair of wings.

Q10: JINN AND SATAN

Who are Jinn, Satan, Iblees and Ifreets?

A. ***"Jinn":*** In many passages of the Qur'an "Jinn" and man are spoken of together. In an ayat 'man' is stated to have been created from clay while "Jinn" from fire. There is much argument about the real nature of "Jinn" but it is safe to say that they are a creation of God, who are hidden from our eyes and have been given "Intelligence" like human beings and are required to follow the Sheriat sent by Allah.

"Iblis" and ***"Satan"*** refer to the same person. He is from "Jinn", was elevated to worship Allah with the angels; and that is why he was included in the order of doing "Sajdah" towards Adam (as.).

"Ifreet": "A huge, powerful Jinn".

Q11: TRIPLE DARKNESS

“He created you from one being, then from that (being) He made its mate; and He hath provided for you of cattle eight kinds. He created you in the wombs of your mothers creation after creation, in a triple darkness ...." (Qur'an, 39:6) What is meant by: (1) a triple darkness? (2) of cattle eight kinds?

A.

(1) "Triple darkness": according to the 'Ahadith of Masumeen it means "the three veils of darkness which cover the unborn child, i.e. the caul or membrane, the womb and the hollow (or stomach) in which the womb is enclosed."

(2) In Surah 6, Ayats 143-4, four kinds of cattle are mentioned in pairs in connection with certain Arab superstitions which are condemned by Allah, the same four pairs are mentioned here as representatives of domesticated cattle given by Allah to man for his benefit. These are sheep, goats, camels and oxen.

Q12: GRADES OF THE PROPHETS

How can we say that our Prophet (s.a.w.) is the highest in rank and greatest of all the prophets, when Allah says in the Qur'an that we should not make any difference between His prophets. See Ayat 285 of Sura Al-Baqarah:-
"....... all believe in Allah and in His angels and in His Messenger; (they say) we make no difference between His messengers...."

A. Compare this Ayat with Ayat 253 of the same Surah and you will find that there WAS grade and RANK among the Prophets and Messengers of Allah. That Ayat says:-
“These messengers, We have exalted some of them above the others.......”
Then what is the meaning of the Ayat 285?
Its meaning is that we have to believe in all the Messengers of Allah, We should not be like Jews who do not believe in Hadhrat Isa (a.s.) and Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.), nor like Christians who do not believe in Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.).

Q13: SINLESSNESS OF THE PROPHETS

We believe in the sinlessness of prophets; but these sentences from a dua (Aamal-e-Arafa) show that they were not sinless:

(1) "WA-BISMIKAL-AZEEMI-LLADHI DA'AK BIHI DAWOODO WA KHARRALAKA SAAJIDA FAGHAFARATA LAHU DHAN-BAH"
(And by Thy Great name by which Dawood prayed to Thee and prostrated before Thee in Sajdah, so that Thou pardoned his Dhanb' i.e. Sin)

(2) "WABISMIKAL-LADHI DA'AKA BIHI ADAMO FAGHAFARATA LAHU DHANBAH."
(And by Thy name by which Adam prayed to Thee, so that Thou pardoned his "Dhanb' i.e. sin)

A. The word "DHANB" (Sin) when used for the prophets, means Tark-e-Awla (leaving a better course for a lawful but unpreferred one), and not sin in usual sense.

Q14: WAS ISA (AS.) BORN ON 25th DECEMBER?

Was Nabii Isa (a.s.) born on 25th December, according to our history?

A.Hazrat Isa (a.s.) was not born in December; he was not born even in winter. It is no question of "our" or "their" history. It is an accepted fact.

25th December was the day when the Romans (worshippers of Mitra) used to celebrate birth of Sun-God. 23rd December, is the shortest day in Northern hemisphere; so, the next day sees the beginning of the elongation of day-time. But the Romans miscalculated and thought that the day starts to become longer from 25th December; hence their festival. When the Roman emperor Constantine left Mitraism to become a Christian, the Christian priests took a lot of myths from Mitraism and made them a part of Christianity to please him and accommodate the Romans' practices within the Christianity. The belief in sonship of God, the atonement, the Mass, Easter, Christmas, all fall in this category.

Q15: RELIGIOUS GUIDE BEFORE OUR HOLY PROPHET

Who was the Prophet in the world before Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.)? If it were Nabi Isa (a.s.) then how many years after his being taken up by Allah came Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w.)? Was it that the world was without any prophet for a long period, and then came Hazrat Muhammad (s.a.w) I hope you will explain to me with full necessary details.

A. The world cannot remain without a religious guide appointed by Allah. That guide may be a prophet or a successor of the prophet (without himself being a prophet). Between Hazrat Isa (a.s.) and Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.) there was a gap of about 6 centuries. During this period, there were 3 chains of religious guides:

(a) The successors of Hazrat Isa (a.s.), last of whom was Hazrat Salman Farsi who became a follower of our Holy Prophet.
(b) The Successors of Hazrat Ismail (a.s.), last of whom was Hazrat Abu Talib (a.s). He also became a follower of our Holy Prophet. These guides in these two chains were not prophets themselves.
(c) Also, there came a few prophets in various places, and name of one or two of them is mentioned in the traditions.

Q16: THE FIRST AYAT REVEALED

On what date and place was the first ayat revealed to the Prophet (s.a.w.)? And which ayat?

A. The prophet of Islam was in the cave of the mountain "Hira" (3 miles from Mecca) when the following 5 Ayats were revealed:
“Proclaim! (or Read!) in the name of they Lord and Cherisher, Who created; created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He who taught (the use of) the pen, taught man that which he knew not.”

Q1 7: IS ‘BISMILLAH' WORD OF ALLAH?

The whole of the holy Qur'an is true word of Allah. The verse "Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem" is at hundreds of places in this holy book. Is this also the word of Allah?

A. Yes. Just as a teacher trains the students in writing an application addressed to himself, Allah teaches His creatures the necessary ways to show their submission to Him. And, by the way, it is mentioned 114 times, not "hundreds".

Q18: LIGHT OF ALLAH?

It is said that Allah produced from His own Sublime Light the Light of Muhammad and from the splendour of that Light created the world 14,000 years before the creation of Adam. Now, the question is:

(a) Is Allah constituted of Light?
(b) What does it actually mean by the word "Light" here?
(c) Does it mean that Adam was created after 14,000 years o the creation of the earth?

A. Allah is not a light; the phrase "Light of Allah" means a "Light" having special honour before Allah, just as the "soul" of Adam (a.s.) was termed by Allah as "My Soul".

'Nur' (Light) is also used in the meaning of "One which is self-evident and illuminates (shows) other things". It is in this sense that Allah is called 'Light', for example, the Ayat, “*Allah is the light of the heavens and earth”* (Qur'an, 24:35). It means that Allah is self-existent and has created the heavens and earth.

The number, 14,000 years, could have been used in literal sense; but usually such phrases mean a long period.

Q19: THE MOTHER OF THE HOLY PROPHET

Did the Holy Prophet Muhammad's mother have any relationship with Madina? Was she born there?

A.No. She was a Quraishite, and her father was “Wahab s/o Abd Manaf, s/o Zuhra s/o Kilab”. Her genealogy meets that of Abdullah in Kilab; Abdullah's genealogy is: Abdullah s/o Abdul-Muttalib s/o Hashim s/o Abd Manaf s/o Qusai s/o Kilab. But the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) was related to the clan of Bani Najjar of Madina, because his great-grandmother was from that tribe and city.Hashim had married Salmah d/o Amr of Bani Najjar in Yathrib (Madina) who was the mother of Abdul-Muttalib.

Q20: MOON IS CLEFT ASUNDER

“The hour drew nigh and the moon was rent in twain” (54:1) what does this verse mean?

A. The correct translation is, "and the moon is cleft (or rent) asunder". It mentions the miracle of the Holy Prophet, when one night the moon was cleft asunder in the valley of Mecca within sight of the Holy Prophet, his companions and the unbelievers.

The next Ayat says: *“And if they see a sign, they turn away and say (that it is) a sorcery continued”*. It clearly shows that unbelievers had seen that miracle and still refused to accept it, by pretending that it was a sorcery. Surely there had happened some thing which made the unbelievers use the word "sorcery".

Q21: TOTAL NUMBER OF AHLUL-BAiT

What is the total number of Ahlut-Bait (a.s.) is it 5, 14 or more. Can we include Hazrat Ali Asghar (a.s.) and the sons of Hazrat Muslim also in Ahlul-Bait (a.s.)? Is there any limit to the number of Ahfuf-Bait (a.s.)?

A. So far as the language is concerned, there is no limit. All the descendants of Ali (a.s.) and Fatima (a.s.) or all Bani Hashim may be included in this word. But when it comes to the interpretation of the Ayat of "Purity" (Ayat-e-Tatheer), Ahadith have clearly shown that it does not include anybody except the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), Bibi Fatimah (a.s.) and 12 Imams (a.s.).

Q22: DISTINCTION OF ‘PANJATAN’

What are the additional distinctions of Panjatan (a.s.) over the rest of the nine innocent Imams? According to the "Event of the Blanket" (Hadise Kisa) is it only Panjatan who are Ahlul-Bait?

A. Ahlul-Bait means Bibi Fatimah and 12 Imams (a.s.). The "Panjatan" have more "Fadhilat" than the rest, because the Prophet (s.a.w.) is the supreme most of all creatures of Allah, and Hazrat Ali (a.s.) is his "Nafs", which means 'like him in almost all things (with exception of prophethood and the specialities of the prophethood)'. Bibi Fatimah (a.s.) has a position below her father and husband but above all other Imams. And these 5 Holy personalities were directly included in the Ayats of "Tat-heer," "Mubahila-" and "Mawadaat". And Hazrat Ali, Imam Hasan, Imam Husain and 12th Imam (Peace be on them all) have "Fadhilat" over remaining 8 Imams. But it is not good for us to ponder too much on these matters. For us, all have equal authority; and if among themselves one is superior to the other, it has nothing to do with our own duties towards them.

Q23: WHO IS "IMAM-E-MUBEEN"?

(a) Please let me know the exact meaning of the Arabic word 'IMAM' and 'IMAM-I-MUBIN' These words are contained twelve times in Holy Qur'an.

(b) What is the meaning and commentaries of the word "YASIN' according to our Shia belief?

(c) It looks many authors of Shia community claim that 12th verse of Sura Yasin (36:12) was revealed in favour of Hadhrat Ali bin Abi Talib. Will you, please, let me know at least three references of Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims respectively, who have admitted that Hadhrat Ali was "Imam-i-Mubin".

(d) It sounds apparently that Sunnis either correctly or incorrectly have translated the word "Imam-i-Mubin" (Qur'an, 36:12) as '"Aamal Nama" and "Lauh-i-Muhfuz" on the strength of the following:-

i. The Sunnis are lacking the basic concept of Imamat;

ii. They are trying to conceal the excellence of Hazrat Ali by not interpreting the real meaning of "Imam-i-Mubin";

iii. Their Mufassirin (Commentators) have followed the policy of partiality, looking at only one side of Islam.

But, Sir, you must have noticed that none of these three points were held by Christians and Jews scholars in their translations of Holy Qur'an, and that Europeans have translated it utterly on the ground of neutrality and impartiality. Why they too have translated the word "Imam-i-Mubin" as ""Open Book", ""Plain Register". ""Clear Record or Writing"? Are their translation works not correct? If incorrect, please supply your comprehensive comments in this regard.

(e) Suppose, the word "Imam-i-Mubin" means "Open Book", "Plain Register" and we may just hold it incorrect. Now please describe why Shia commentators themselves have wrongly translated the word "Imam-i-Mubin" of 79th verse of Sura Hijr (15:791) Why it is so? Here Shia authors and commentators translated it as ""Plain highway" or '"Open roadway".

A. Before I write anything let me point out that the Christian and Jewish scholars have not translated the Qur'an "utterly on the ground of neutrality and impartiality", as you have suggested.

First of all, their translations and commentaries are based on Sunni Books of "Tafseer" and "Hadith". Shia books were not available to them; and, moreover, as the motive of the orientalists' translations was not a “search for truth” but to give some ammunition in the hands of the missionaries (many translators were themselves missionaries), they naturally looked into the books of the Sunnis who form the majority of Islamic community and amongst whom the missionaries were expected to preach Christianity in almost all Islamic place (except Iran and a part of Iraq).Therefore, they followed Sunni ideas.

And it was because of this background that almost all of them dismissed Shia sect as a non-entity, a supposedly heretical group of Islam, which, according to them, came into being because of political differences and had no religious standing.

So these are your neutral and impartial translators!

The-word "Imam" means "Leader" or "Guide". And it is used for various meanings: Successor of the Prophet; Religious Guide, and hence the Prophet; Divine book; One who leads in prayer.

All the above meanings are based on the basic concept of "Guidance" and “Leadership”

Also, it is used for the "Path" (because it leads from one point to another).

In the Qur'an it has also been used for the "Books of deeds" in which our actions are recorded.
Now see the examples:

(1) Qur'an, 2:124 - Here Imam has been used for "Leader" (in the sense of "prophet")
(2) Qur'an, 25:74; 21:73; 32:24 - It is used for Leader, meaning "Religious Guides".
(3) Qur'an: 9:12 and 28:4 - Here also it is used for Leaders' who lead people to Hell (or should we say, "Who mislead").
(4) Qur'an: 17:71 - mentions of "Imam" in the meaning of "Leader" and, of course, good and evil, both types.
(5) In 15:79, this word has been used for "way" or "path". "Imam-e-Mubin" in this ayat cannot be translated in any other way.

Now before explaining the meanings of "Imamin Mubin" (in 36:11) let me explain one thing: According to numerous 'Ahadith' of the Holy Prophet and Imams, "The Qur'an has been revealed...... and for each of its Ayats there an 'appearance' (apparent meaning) and a 'hidden' meaning....." (This Hadith has been narrated by the Sunnis from the Holy Prophet s.a.w).

According to Shia faith, both types of meanings have to be believed, as both are from Allah; and both meanings are complementary to each other.

In this ayat of Sura "Yasin", the apparent meaning is the "Book of Deeds", which has been described in various ways by various translators.

And its "inner" meaning may be known from the tradition of the Holy Prophet, narrated by the famous Sunni Mufassir, and Muhaddith, Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti in his Tafseer "Ad-Durrul Manthur (Vol. V, Page 261, Egypt edition):-
"Abd bin Hamid, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim have narrated from Quatadah that this ayat means that "everything is preserved in a "Leader" (The Arabic word implies a human being.)

And our 5th Imam (a.s.) has said that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) explaining this ayat before Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Umar said-(in a long Hadith) turning towards All bin Abi Talib: "Verily, this is that 9Imam Mubin) in whom Allah has contained the knowledge of everything."

I hope this explanation will satisfy you that neither the "outer" meaning given by our Sunni brethren is wrong, nor is the "inner" meaning described by our 5th Imam (as.) on the authority of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.).

But I have not seen this "inner" meaning mentioned clearly in Sunni books; therefore, you cannot blame them if they do not accept it.

"Ya-Sin" is one of the titles of the Holy Prophet (s.aw) This short letter is not a place to give more details; but you may rest assured that there is no difference between the Sunnis and Shias in this matter

Q24: INCOME OF 14 MASUMEEN

What was the source of income of our 14 Masumeen (a.s)?

A.Usually trade and agriculture.

Q25: RELIABILITY OF DUA الهی عظم البلاء وبرح الخفاء

I am perplexed with a problem that I don't know what I shall do. I recite the Du'as in the Ithna-asheri Mosque, and it is one of the Duas which is usually recited is الهی عظم البلاء و برح الخفاء For so long I have been reciting this Dua without any doubt: but recently a certain old man told me that it is 'SHIRK' to recite this Dua. He showed me verses from the Holy Qur'an proving his claim.

For certain period I ceased to recite this dua. Then my father insisted that I should continue to recite it. When that man heard me reciting this dua again, he asked me why I had resumed it and I replied him that my father told me to continue reciting it.

Then that man quoted this verse from the Holy Qur'an and said that in this case I should not follow my father-
"'AND IF THEY (THE PARENTS) CONTEND WITH THEE THAT THOU SHOULD ASSOCIATE WITH ME (ALLAH) WHAT THEE HAST NO KNOWLEDGE OF (THEN THOU) OBEY THEM NOT………..."(Ch 31,verse 15)

Now whom should I follow, my father or that man? To support his claim that man said that there is not any tradition from the Aimma (a.s) which says that we can ask them besides Allah

A. Shirk, in short, is of two kinds: (1) Shirk in belief, and (2) Shirk in actions. Shirk in belief means believing that there is more than one God.

We know that your belief is free from that type of Shirk.

Shirk in action: One example, in Islamic Sheriat, of this type of Shirk is doing Sajda to other than Allah. But this entirely depends upon the order of Allah, and here we can not use our own judgment. For example, let us look at the above-mentioned example:-
Allah ordered the angels to do Sajdah before Adam (as); and when Satan disobeyed, he was not honoured as true "Muwahhid" (monotheist), but was branded as a "Mal'un", because he disobeyed Allah.

Likewise, Hadhrat Yakub (a,s.) and his eleven sons did Sajdah to Hadhrat Yusuf (as); and they were not called "Mushrik".

But the same thing which was allowed for angels and Hadhrat Yakub (a.s.) is now absolutely forbidden in Islam, and if one does it now, he will be called a "Mushrik".

So, the Shirk in action can not be comprehended or adjudged by us. It rests on the order of Allah.

Another example: There were hundreds of idols in Kaaba; and the Arabs worshipped them and kissed them and what not. And also in the walls of the same Kaaba was the "Black Stone", also honoured and kissed by the Arabs.

The Holy Prophet destroyed all the idols; but did nothing against "the Black Stone": rather, he made it an object of reverence and kissed it. Now, the Christian writers allege that the Black Stone is a legacy of paganistic rites. But we know that kissing it and respecting it is not Shirk because it is done by the order of the Holy Prophet. Non-Muslims may not

understand the difference between kissing an idol and kissing the Black Stone; but for the Muslims the difference is clear.

The trouble is that many people rely upon their own judgment in deciding whether a certain action is Shirk or not. The result is that Sunnis, for example, think that doing Sajdah on a "Muhr" is Shirk; making Taazia is Shirk; kissing the Zarih of the Holy Prophet in Madina is Shirk.

They do not understand that so far as our actions are concerned, they have to be governed by the commands of Allah, the Holy Prophet (saw.) and Masumeen (a.s.)

After this short explanation, let me tell you that this Dua الهی عظم البلاء وبرح الخفاء has been recorded by Sheikh Mufeed (a.r), through his chain of narrators from Hadhrat Seheb-ul-Asr (a.s.). Sheikh Mufeed died in 423 AH.

Then Sheikh Tabrasi (who wrote Tafseer Majmaul-Bayan and died in 548 A.H.) narrated another incident concerning the same Dua. The incident is as follows:-
Abdul Hasan Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abil-Laith (who was a well-known pious man) was in danger of his life and had fled to the graves of our 7th and 9th Imams (a.s.) and hidden there. Then Hadhrat Saheb-ul-Asr came to him and taught him this Du'a and by reciting it, he was spared his life and the danger passed away. When the Imam (a.s.) was teaching him this Du'a, and came to the words یامولا ی یاصاحبْ لزمان he pointed to his own chest.

The Dua printed in 'Mafatihul Jinan' (on page 115-116) is narrated from Sheikh Kaf'ami (who died in 895 A.H.). There are a few differences in the 3 narrations, but they are immaterial.

I remember some one had written to me from Zanzibar that this Du'a is narrated by an "unknown" person. In view of above-mentioned details it is obvious that the narrator was "unknown" to only those "who do not know".

It is not correct to say that there is no tradition to show that we can ask from Masumeen (a.s.). There are some traditions, one of which quoted here from Bihar-ul-Anwar:-

Imam Jafer Sadiq (as.) told his companion, Mufazzal bin Umar: "If you have any "Hajat" (need) towards Allah and are unable to fulfil it then pray 2 Rak'at Namaz; after Namaz say Takbir 3 times; then recite Tasbih of E Fatima (a.s.), then go into sajda and say 100 times یامولاتی یافاطمة أغیشینی (O My Lady, O Fatima, Help me);then put your right cheek on earth and say likewise (100 times), then go into Sajdah and say likewise 110 times; then mention your need, and Allah will fulfil it." He is the same Mufazzal who had written the book of توحیدمفضل from dictation of the same imam (a.s).

If seeking any help from anyone other than Allah is Shirk, then no prophet and no Imam could be called Muwahhid. There are scores examples even in the Qur'an where prophets sought others' help. Hadhrat Isa (a.s) said من انصاری الی اللّٰہ (Who are my helpers in the cause of Allah?)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) sought help of the Muslims of Madina and they are called انصار (Helpers) in the Qur'an.

Also, we know that Imam Husain (a.s.) several times asked the army of Yazid to help him (Istighathah). Was it, God forbid, bad to seek the help of those unbelievers?

Our Imams (a.s.) had to contend with various types of "Fitnah' in their days. There were some persons who thought that the Imams were Khalique and Razique; others said that they were the "Rabb' (god). While refuting such falsehoods, our Imams (a.s.) had to emphasize their total dependence on Allah in all matters.

On the other hand, there were a great many people who did not know how high was the position of Muhammad and Aal-e-Muhammad (a.s) before Allah. When talking to such persons, (if the circumstances allow and there was no danger to them from such statements) the Imams (a.s) described their exalted position.

For example. Sheikh Karajiki (died 449 A.H.) has narrated that once Imam Abu Hanifah (founder of the Hanafi school of law) took his food with Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.); at the end of the meal, Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s) said:
“All thanks are due to Allah, the Lord of the universe; O Allah! it is from Thee and from Thy Rasul".

Abu Hanifa said: "O Abu Abdillah! you ascribed a partner to Allah?

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) said: Woe to thee! Verily Allah says in His Book:

وَمَا نَقَمُواْ إِلاَّ أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ

(And they did not become (your) enemy, but just because Allah and His Apostle had made them rich from His bounty). (Qur'an, 9:74)

And He says in another Place.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوْاْ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُواْ حَسْبُنَا

اللّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ

(If only they had been content with what Allah and His Apostle gave them, and had said, 'Sufficient unto us is Allah; Allah and His Messenger will soon give us of His bounty").(Qur'an, 9:59)

Abu Hanifah said: "By Allah, it is as though I had never before read or heard these two Ayats from the Book of Allah."

Imam (a.s.) said: "No; surely you had read them and heard them. But Allah has revealed about you and your like and He said:

أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

(or are their hearts locked up by them?) (Quran, 47:24)

And also He has said:

كَلاَّ بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

By no means! But on their hearts is the stain of (ill) which they do. (Qur'an. 83:14)

Your 'old man' should not try to refute this Hadith by saying that this episode, perhaps, is

not authentic; because, even if we totally reject this episode, there is no way to reject the argument given in this Hadith because that argument is based upon Qur'an and Qur'an cannot be rejected.

Q26. OUR IMAMS WERE ARABS. WHY NOT ARE WE ARABS?

One Shia brother asked me. "Our Imams were Arabs. Why are we not Arabs?"

A. Well, Arab means a resident of Arabia, or one whose mother language is Arabic. Our Imams were Arabs because they lived in Arabia. How can a man living in Africa or India become Arab? The Prophet (s.a.w.) was an Arab; but he was sent for the whole mankind. He declared, "I have been sent to all: red, black and yellow." And surely among his followers are people of every race and every country. Does your friend mean that the whole mankind should be squeezed into Arabia, to make them Arabs?

You should remember what Allah has said in the Qur'an:
"O people. We have created you of a male and female; and we have distributed you into groups and tribes so that you might know one another; verily the most honoured of you before Allah is the one who is the most pious of you." (Qur'an, 49:13).

And the Holy Prophet of Islam has said: "There is no superiority for a Quraishite over a non-Quraishite, nor for an Arab over a non-Arab. All of you are from Adam and Adam was from dust"

So, the Prophet and Imams (peace be on them all) had come to make us most pious and most God-fearing; they had not come to make us Arab. Our colour, origin or country was not their concern at all; they were interested in making us good believer and good Muslim.

Q27. WHY SHOULD JESUS FOLLOW MAM MAHDI?

Why should a great Prophet, Jesus,follow an Imam, Hazrat Mahdi (a.s.), at the time of their re-appearance?

A. Our twelve Imams are higher and greater than all previous prophets except Hadhrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.) whose successors they are. As to why, please, read my book "Muhammad is the Last Prophet".

Q 28: WHO ARE GOG AND MAGOG?

Gog and Magog are two terms descriptively used in reference to two nations of people they are mentioned in Christian Scriptures (the Revelation of St. John - King James Version of the Bible). Now, who are the Gog and Magog people? Realize that I understand that Zul-Qarnain is considered to be Alexander the Great; however Sura is dealing with the future tense and it is that I am concerned with. Any assistance you may render in helping me will be most deeply appreciated by me.......also…..Said the Prophet. "How excellent a gift and how admirable a present is a word of wisdom which you hear and inwardly digest and then carry it and teach it to a brother Muslim; verity it is equivalent to a year's worship".

Said the Prophet. "In truth Allah and His angels as well as the heavens and earth, even the ant in it's hill and the whale in the sea, will bless the man who teaches his fellow man."

A. I have sent you a book "Day of Judgment" in which this topic has Seen discussed briefly. Please, study that book and you will find that many of your queries are answered therein.

As for these questions, read the following: -

1. Zul-Qarnain was a man of Allah; Alexander was a pagan. The two cannot be the same.
2. Appearance of Dajjal is closely connected with re-appearance of Imam Mahdi and Hazrat Isa (Peace be on both); and their appearance is the precursor of the Day of Judgment. Allah Taala says no one can know when the Day of Judgment is to come. Therefore, naturally, no one can know when Im
3. am Mahdi and Hazrat-Isa will re-appear.

Therefore, we have no choice but to reject all the forecasts (whether they are in the Bible or in Muslims' writings) which say that Dajjal will appear in this or that time.

Q 29: MUJTAHIDS SOON AFTER GHAIBAT

Who was the 1st Mujtahid after our 12th Imam (a.s.) disappeared and how many Mujtahids succeeded him. How many followers of the living Imam (a.s.) are there in the world today? Could you give me the possible figures for each country?

A. Between 260 A.H. and 329 A.H., there were 4 Deputies of the Imam (a.s.) especially appointed by him (one after another) to act as a link between the Imam (a.s.) and his followers.

At the end of that period. Imam (a.s.) informed his last Deputy that after the death of that Deputy no one will be appointed in his place, and the Shias were to follow the guidance of those scholars who knew the Ahadith of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) (and who had certain virtues and qualifications). It is not possible to give here all the names.

The number of the Shias in all countries is not known. As a rough estimate, there are 70 million Shias in the world, most of them in Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, India and Middle East.

Q.30: CHANGING THE TAQLEED

If one had made his mind to follow one Mujtahid; eventually he changes his mind to follow another. Is it necessary to ask permission from the previous Mujtahid?

A. It is not allowed to change from one Mujtahid to another unless the second Mujtahid is 'more learned' than the one whose Taqleed you are doing at present. And in such cases there is no need ask permission from anyone.

Q31: WHY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MUJTAHIDS?

Why Mujtahideen differ in the same subject? For instance, some Mujtahideen say that Namaze Jum'a is Wajib while others say that it is "Wajibe-Takhiri" or Sunnah?

A. There are many reasons, most important of them being the difference in the interpretation of some crucial words or phrases in Ayat or Hadith.

Q32: MUJTAHID AND TAQLID

We would appreciate any information you could give us on Taqleed.

A. In every sphere of life we have to heed the advice of the experts in that field. Likewise, in the matter of Islamic Laws, we must obey the rulings of the experts of that Law. Those

experts are called Mujtahids; and the act of obeying their rulings is called Taqlid. Here are some of the conditions which govern our choice of the Mujtahid:

(a) He must be Baligh (i.e. adult),
(b) 'Aqil (i.e. sane),
(c) man,
(d) alive at the time of beginning the Taqlid.
(e) Ithna-ashari,
(f) 'Adil,
(g) Mujtahid,
(h) A'lam,
(i) Legitimate child,
(j) Having good memory,
(k) Not involved in worldly affairs so as to hinder his scholarly persuits.

'Adil means a person who does not commit big sins even unintentionally; and if he commits small sins (not intentionally) he repents at once.

Only an 'Adil can lead in prayers, be accepted as reliable witness and appointed as Qadi. A'lam means one who is the most learned of all.

Q 33: CALIBRE OF IJTIHAD

Nowadays "Ijtihad" has become a child's play. Without mentioning the name of our Mujtahids, "AWAKE" published by Young Muslim Association of South Africa condomned those who claim Ijtihad but do not have deep knowledge.

A. I did not see the said article; South African publications are banned in Tanzania. But you should not be too much worried about it. There is no room of "Inferiority complex" on our part. Even admitting that the word "Mujtahid' has been misused especially in India and Pakistan, the calibre and character of our scholars is far better than any other sect.

Q34: HOW TO REFORM ISLAMIC WORLD?

How can we reform the Islamic world today in the light of the Prophecy of the Holy Prophet that in the period nearing Qiyamat people will go astray?

A. By telling them of those prophecies and warning them to abstain from evil deeds. Forewarned is fore-armed.

Q35.FRIENDSHIP WITH ENEMIES OF ISLAMS

"O ye who believe, choose not for friends such of those who received the scripture before you, and of the disbelievers, as make a jest and sport of your religion........" (v.60). Is it a sin (according to this verse) to establish friendship with Jews, Christians or Atheists?

A. Yes. A faithful Muslim should not be in intimate association with those "who take your religion for a mockery or sport", because such an association will sap the earnestness of his own faith and turn him into a cynical and insincere Muslim.

Q36: IS MIDDLE EAST WAR A JIHAD?

When recently in England, I heard a friend saying that the recent Middle East War was classed as 'Jihad'. I was very surprised to hear it because I am under the impression that a war is classed as Jihad only when fought for the defence of Islam.

A. A war is called 'Jihad' if it is fought with permission of Prophet or Imam (peace be on

them all). Also a war fought for the defence of the Muslims (not "defence of Islam") is called Jihad. Now the war of the Muslims against Israel is 'Jihad' (in the meaning of Defensive War) because it is the Jews who have come from all around the world to Palestine and have turned the Palestinian Muslims out, usurping their country, land, farms and homes Now a generation has passed that the Palestinian Muslims are living in tents of the refugee camps, without any root anywhere. They are fighting to regain their homes and motherland, and as such it is a 'Jihad'.

Q37: CAN LADIES AND GENTS SIT TOGETHER IN RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL GATHERINGS?

The Ithna-asheris in our town (in Canada) have established a Union to perform religious ceremonies. At the moment the Union does not have any particular place to hold Majlises; they hire halls for this purpose once a month. In these majlises and other social functions, our ladies and gents sit in the same room or hall where there is no purdah at all.
The argument put by them is: "When our ladles go out for work or for shopping, they are not in Purdah; then why purdah in majlis?
Also, they say that discrimination is prohibited in the country.
I, by this letter, seek guidance from you, according to the rules of the Sheriat.

A. I was shocked to read that the Union "is holding majlises and other functions where the ladies and gents sit in the same room or hall where there is no purdah at all".

It is amusing to note that they are doing it in the name of avoiding 'discrimination'. Your country is a Christian one. Neither the Catholics nor the Protestants admit women into priesthood. Catholic nuns are obliged to cover their whole body even in their dormitories; and a woman going before the Pope must cover her whole body, even if she, in her public life, is a 'striptease artist'.

So, the 'anti-discrimination' laws have not compelled the Christians to relax their rules that are obviously 'based on sex-discrimination.

Now coming to the Shia Ithna-asheri Sheriat: -
It is the unanimous ruling of all the Mujtahids, right from the beginning upto now, that:-

1. A woman must cover her entire body and hair in such a way that it is not seen by any man who is not within prohibited degree. (Within prohibited degree: with whom marriage is prohibited, like father, brother, son etc.)
2. It is 'Harem' (unlawful) for a man to look at the body (or part thereof! of a woman who is not within prohibited degree, whether it be with lusty intention or without such intention.) Also, it is 'Haram' for a woman to look at the body of a man who is not within prohibited degree;
3. The above rules are for her whole body except the 'face' and hands (from the wrists to the finger-tips); Note: Neck, ears and hair are not included in face' and must remain covered.
4. So far as the face and hands (as explained above) are concerned, it is the unanimous ruling of all the Mujtahids that it is Haram (unlawful) to look at the face and hands of a woman, if that look is with lusty intention;
5. The only difference of opinion is about looking at the face and hands of a woman (who is not within prohibited degree) without any lusty intention. Some Mujtahids say that it is allowed; others say that it is not allowed.

The present great Mujtahids (Agha-e-Khoui, Agha-e-Milani, Agha-e-Shahrudi and Agha-e-Shariatmadari) say that it is not Haram to look at the face and hands of a woman who is

not within prohibited degree, without any lusty intention. But even then, they say that it is 'Ihtiyat-e-Wajib' to refrain from such looking.

Looking at non-Muslim women, who usually do not cover their bodies, is allowed if it is without any lusty intention.

Now if someone is prepared to reach the furthest limit, he can do so only if the womenfolk are prepared to cover their whole body from head to foot in a proper way (not in revealing clothes). To put it in a more clear way, a woman must cover herself as is done in Ihram, covering her neck, hair and ears also, leaving only that part of the face open which is washed in Wudhu.

This is the tenet of the Shia Ithna-asheri Sheriat And the Article 2, Section 1 of the Constitution of your Institution binds it to follow "Islam according to teachings of the Shia Jaffery Teachings".

I think it is high time for the Jamaats to make it compulsory for the women to attend the majlises and other functions in proper Islamic dress, even if they sit behind a partition. The Jews compel their congregation to wear skul caps and prayer-shawls when praying in a synagogue, and it is not considered as an undue hardship. Why our own Jamaats and institutions cannot enforce such rules?

I know that these women do not observe purdah in their daily lives. Someone may say that to make such women observe purdah within the Imambara or majlises amounts to hypocrisy! But it is not so. By making them observe the rules of sheriat every time they come to the majlis or into imambara, we do remind them what they should be (and are not); we make them remember how a good shia Ithna-atheri woman should dress. This ‘reminding’ Is the most important factor in keeping the torch of faith alive. By ‘reminding’ they will never forget their noble Islamic heritage. Remove this restriction, and your children will not know the difference between Muslim and non-muslim way of life.

Q. 38: DRESS OF THE LADY-TEACHERS

The Dar-es Salaam Ithna-asheri Union runs a Nursery School, which employees Ithna-Asheri lady teachers. The Secretary of the Nursery School, who is a male member, is in~charge of the overall supervision of the smooth running of the school. He directly deals with the Headmistress on certain matters requiring his attention, i e. collecting fees from her for depositing in the bank, attend to the requirement of repairs of the school whenever required and such other matters, is the job done by him within the Sheriat?

The children are usually dropped in and collected after by their fathers or messengers in which case the lady teachers are involved in handing over the children to them. Also while paying fees the Headmistress is involved in dealing with male members who come to pay fees. In view of the above, are we allowed by Sheriat to employ Ithna-Asheri lady teachers in the Nursery School?

A. Please read carefully the reply to the Question "Can Ladies and Gents sit together in Majlises and Social Functions?" (given above), and you will know the answer to your question.

I take this opportunity to emphasize the importance for Shia Institutions of sincerely and faithfully following the rules of Sheriat in all their affairs. I strongly advise the Union to adopt the Islamic dress as the compulsory uniform for the teachers,

Q 39:'PURDAH' CREATES RICKETS?

Circumcision, indeed, prevents carcinoma but purdah (veil) predisposes to "Rickets'. Why is it so much controversial?

A. How many Muslim women have fallen sick just because of "Purdah"? Do you have any data to compare their rate of sickness and mortality with those women who do not observe Purdah?

Q40:AGE LIMIT FOR PURDAH?

Is there any limit to the age of 'Namahram'? We had a lady of 70 years who died and her face was kept open and every man was asked to come and see her face. Someone objected, but he was told that after 70 years it is allowed.

A. If a man is of such an advanced age that he has completely lost all sexual desires, then a woman may go before him with open face. But nobody can fix any age-limit for this change. It depends upon health, race and many other such factors.

And in any case, it was improper for the 'Na-Mahrams' to go to see the face of that dead woman. Only 'Mahram' males should have been allowed there, no matter what her age.

Q41:VAGINAL EXAMINATION BY A DOCTOR

Should a Muslim woman allow her vaginal examination by a male doctor?

A. According to Islam, a man is not allowed to look at the body or hair of a "Ghair Mahram" woman, whether it is with lusty intention or not. Likewise, a woman is not allowed to look at the body of a "Ghair Mahram*' man.

This is the basic rule. Now coming to your Question.
If it is necessary for a male doctor, for the purpose of treatment of a "Ghair-Mahram" woman, to look at her or to touch her, then it is allowed. But if the treatment can be done by just looking at her, he should not touch her; and if it can be done by just touching her without looking, he should not look at her.

If there is no lady doctor and diagnosis is not possible without vaginal examination, the male doctor should at first try to use a mirror and look into the mirror. If this is not possible, then looking at the private parts is allowed.

Q42: SEPARATION OF BOYS AND GIRLS A PROBLEM

Is the meeting of a boy and a girl (both adult) with the sole purpose of marriage allowed in Islam in this 20 century? A closed-eye procedure leads to many problems later.

A. They are allowed to see each other once only. (This permission does not include touching or going out together). And so far as "many problems later" are concerned, the ratio of divorces to the Marriages in western countries is well-known. (It reaches the ratio of 1:3, and in some places even 1:2). So, the "open-eye" procedure creates more troubles than our "backward out-of-date barbaric" system can ever do.

Anyhow, if they want to get to know more of each other, the only legal way, which I can think of, is to enter into "Mut'a" openly.

Q43: MIXING OF GIRLS WITH BOYS

Nowadays boys and girls like to live together right from their youth but results are not good; they fail to reach permanent bond of love and marriage. Frequently, the girls move from one boy to another and at last are left out. For safety against marrying a left-out girl, can a Shia boy have a girl from his youth? If not, then is it a sin marrying a prostitute?

A. No Shia (and no Muslim) is allowed to have any contact with any woman who is not his 'Mahram' (e.g. mother, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, mother-in-law, daughter-in-law) unless he is married to her.

If there is any social problem, it is because the people have left the path of sheriat. If they encounter any difficulty by going against sheriat, it is their fault. Rules of sheriat cannot be changed to suit the whims of a man (or of a community) which has no regard for Law of Islam, and wants Islam to give him concession because he (or they) has/have already commited a sin. Sin deserves punishment, not 'concession'.

Q44: HIGHER EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

Is education, especially further education, for females forbidden in Islam? Give reasons.

A. I am sending you the latest issue of the 'LIGHT' wherein you will find the answer to a question about 'Purdah' (see Question 37)'. If any girl can observe the rules of the Sheriat, as explained in that answer, she may get education as you have asked. But if she, by getting further education, is not able to remain within the limit laid down by Sheriat, then she has to forego anything which makes her go against the Sheriat, be it education or service. In the eyes of Islam, a Muslim who follows the rules of Sheriat faithfully (even if he/she is ignorant in the eyes of his friends) is thousand times better than a Muslim who goes against Sheriat (even if he is considered highly educated by the Society).

Q45: RIGHT OF WOMAN CONCERNING MARRIAGE

May I beg to seek your valued FATWA in respect of nikah Marriage Ceremony, to be performed in accordance with the tenets of Islam.

I am a young Muslim girl of about 23 years of age of the Bohra Shia Sect and our Amil Saheb, who possesses the High Authority of His Holiness the Syedna Saheb in Kenya refuses to grant permission to the Bohra resident Priest in Mombasa to perform my "Nikah' Marriage Ceremony by putting allegation on my four brothers that they are Not obedient to him or to the Syedna Saheb, whereas my whole family is MUKHLISIN, loyal to the, Syedna Saheb and to the Dawoodi Bohra Faith.

I may further mention for your very kind information that if I go to Kadhi Court for the marriage Ceremony to be performed by the Chief Kadhi, then the local Representative and the Resident Bohra, Priest give Fatwa that my nikah' will be considered illegal and that my children will also be considered illegal, because the marriage ceremony will be performed by some one else and n by the Bohra Priest appointed by the Syedna Saheb.

Your Eminence, I only beg to know from you that if my marriage ceremony would be performed by a Muslim Kadhi will it be considered legitimate or not and that will my children be considered legitimate or not?

A. For your guidance, I enclose herewith an old issue of our Magazine the Light (Vol. III, No. 6) and advise you to read the article 'Memorandum', which begins on page 6. You may be interested to read para (b) on page 7 which says:-
"(b) Islam, according to Shia School, has given a woman right to contract herself in marriage if she is adult and discreet." Also, see last paras under the sub-heading "State-

controlled Clergy?" which says:-
"The White Paper requires a Muslim intending to marry to give notice of his intention, 21 days before, to a Sheikh authorised by the Minister to solemnize marriages." It has overlooked the fact that Muslim boys and girls can solemnize the marriage themselves without any need to call a Sheikh and ask him to perform the marriage.

"We are sure it is not the intention of the government to create a new version of Islam which would have institutionalized clergy like Christianity. So why this reference to a Sheikh authorized by the Minister? Needless to say that this idea goes extremely against Islam."

Q46: MARRIAGE OF A SEYYID GIRL WITH NON-SEYYID

Can a Seyyid girl marry a non-Seyyid Shia Ithna-asheri, who is well-educated and has a high post in government?

A. Yes. And it does not matter whether he is well-educated and well-to-do or not. There is no colour, caste or race-bar in Islam.

Q47: SLAUGHTERING CHICKENS DURING WEDDING

As you know, our weddings are very traditional and some of our customs are un-Islamic. But it is sometimes difficult to distinguish if some of the things we do during the wedding ceremony are Islamic or not. For example, the bride and the groom have to step on the blood of a freshly-slaughtered chicken or goat. Is this allowed in Islam?

A. This rite is un-Islamic, and should be discarded.

Q.48: SHOULD ONE WAIT FOR A GOOD WIFE?

I am a young man and I want to marry for physical comfort and peace of mind. But the difficulty is that at present I can't find a good wife, having Islamic manners and back-ground. Now, what should I do? Should I wait for a good girl? Or, should I choose from the girls presently available?

A. If someone cannot remain without a wife and is afraid that by remaining unmarried he may fall into sin, then it is wajib to enter into marriage; he must try, in any case, to teach the Islamic ways and manners to the wife.

If, on the other hand, he may control his emotion and is confident that he can save himself from falling into sin, then it is better to remain unmarried and search for a good wife.

Q49: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NIKAH AND MUTAA

What is the difference between Nikah and Mutaa? Why is the institution of Mutaa not being widely used in Africa?

A. The differences between permanent and temporary marriages are as follows:-

1. A woman married by Mut'aa cannot be divorced. The parties become absolutely separated upon the expiry of the period agreed upon.
2. But the husband may dissolve the marriage of Mut'aa by making to the woman a gift of the remaining term, i.e. to waive his right to her.
3. The wife, married by Mut'aa cannot be subject to 'ILA' or 'LAAN'
4. A Mut'aa marriage creates no right of inheritance in either party. But, if there is an express condition stipulated in the formula (Segha) of 'IJAB' and 'QUBUL' the parties would inherit from each other if the death occurs during the period of Mut'aa or its Iddat.

5. In Mut'aa marriage, the woman's Iddat period extends for two full terms of her monthly course, if she is not pregnant. But if she is pregnant, the Iddat lasts until the delivery of the child. The Iddat of widow is four months and ten days, like a widow of a permanent marriage, if she is not pregnant. But if she is pregnant, the Iddat of death lasts until the delivery of the child, or four months and 10 days, whichever is longer.
   If she is in the age of having her monthly course, but does not have it owing to any reason other than pregnancy, her Iddat will be forty-five days.

There are some other differences but this much is sufficient for all practical purposes.

People nowadays see no harm in committing adultery; but are shy of taking advantage of the permissions given by Sheriat.

Q50: IS MUTAA FORBIDDEN?

What should a young person do if he finds it difficult to control his sexual desire while he refrains from sexual immorality and masturbation? He can't afford to marry, but though he can afford to marry temporary (Mutaa) for at least 3 days, he cannot perform this Mutaa as it is not recognised by the Marriage Law of Tanzania.

A. Non-recognition of 'Mut'aa' does not mean that it is a crime. It just means that if there is any dispute the courts will not recognize the parties as husband and wife.

Q51: MUT'AA, ADULTERY AND MAINTENANCE OF WIFE

(a) Mutaa amounts to nothing but adultery?
(b) If a woman married in Mut'a is in a better finaneied position than her husband and refuses to accept maintenance from him, is it allowed in Islam?
(c) In the above case, if the woman is married in permanent marriage, can she forego her maintenance?

A.

(a) Is not the "marriage" (in all its forms) just a legalized adultery? All conditions which are necessary for a Permanent Marriage are necessary in 'Mut'aa” (Temporary) Marriage. Even the word "Permanent marriage" is misleading, because in Islam no marriage is a" permanent". The husband can terminate the marriage by the simple device of Talaq. So where is the "permanency"?
A Sheriat which recognizes Talaq, cannot ridicule Mut'aa, because "Marriage + Divorces = Mut'aa.
(b) There is no maintenance in Mut'a marriage; so this question does not arise.
(c) The wife of permanent marriage is entitled to maintenance. It is her right. But every right may be waived by the right-holder, and the wife may, accordingly forego this right if she so desires.

Q52: HOW TO RELEASE SEXUAL TENSION?

I am a healthy 27 years old man with normal sexual desires. Due to some extremely serious unavoidable circumstances, it is virtually impossible for me to marry at present. In East African environment at present it is impossible to do "Mut'aa' with a woman.

Now in order to relieve my sexual tension, without involvement with a prostitute or committing adultery (Zina); is there anything wrong if I do masturbation? I know Islam forbids masturbation but then in the circumstances mentioned above, is it not the best solution? If not, why?

A. You better try to find some woman (even Sunni or Christian will do) for Mut'a.

Q53: WHY MASTURBATION IS NOT ALLOWED?

Why shouldn't sex education be introduced in schools? I was faced once with a tough question. A person asked me if masturbation was not a good way to release tension which otherwise would result in a sexual intercourse with the opposite sex. He showed me an article which appeared in an American newspaper. The article says at least twice a week one should masturbate if he wants to lead a comfortable life without heart attack. The article was by a Professor in one of the American Universities.

A. Masturbation is Haram in Islam. It is not possible to write on this subject in a short letter.

In a medical encyclopaedia, it is written that masturbation becomes harmful "only when it exceeds the limit, and then medical treatment becomes necessary".

Two of the harmful effects of exceeding the limit (which have not been mentioned in that book) are as follows:-
First, the base of penis becomes thinner compared to the rest of the organ; the penis becomes curved to the right or left, (if left hand is used, then to the left, and vice-versa).
Secondly, the will-power gradually weakens, and even if the person concerned wants to leave that habit, he cannot. It is habit-forming; and in view of this, the pious admonitions of the psychologists "not to exceed the limit" looses all its weight.

Many people say that masturbation is "a natural" thing. Why? Because, some young bulls or other animals have been observed to indulge in it.

If we accept this "logic" as valid, we will have to sanction many other things also. For example, marriage between brother and sister, between mother and son. And why marriage at all? Sexual intercourse without any "religious sanction" has been practised in the animal world since time immemorial. Therefore, it is "natural" And therefore, it should be allowed and advocated! What kind of logic is this?

Others go so far as to declare that there is no difference between masturbation and normal sexual intercourse.

They apparently forget that in the normal sexual intercourse all the senses contribute to the stimulation and orgasm: Man and Woman see their partner, touch each other, say endearing words to each other and hear the stimulating words and sounds; and likewise the senses of smell and taste are utilized.And penetration of male organ inside the female ultimately leads to the final excitement and orgasm.

But in masturbation the only source of stimulation is imagination, in which no other sense takes any part. The whole burden is loaded upon mind; and, as a result, while the normal sexual intercourse results in happiness and joy, masturbation creates depression. (I am not talking about physical fatigue which is a normal thing. The talk is about emotional and psychological effects).

I hope this short discourse will satisfy your friend that masturbation is not "a normal and harmless thing".

So far as "sex education" is concerned, Islam expects the elders to teach the youngsters everything concerning Janabat, monthly course, child birth etc., and about the Nikah and

all that it involves. In the Indian society, this subject is "taboo"; while in Arabia and other Isiamic places, women openly ask about the so-called "secret" Masael.

Q54: HOW TO GET RID OF THE HABIT OF MASTURBATION

From the age of 13 to the age of 14 I have masturbated almost daily. Now I am trying to control, but I fail every time. About e months ago, I had succeeded in stopping to masturbate for two weeks. But nowadays I seem to fail and have started again.

The result of this is that I have become very thin and weak. And the worst result is that my beliefs in religion are fading away.

I would be very pleased, if you would find me an alternative to leave masturbation. I think I can leave masturbation if I visited a prostitute once in two weeks, though I have not yet visited a prostitute. But I don't know whether visiting a prostitute once in two weeks is better and has less sin than masturbating almost daily.

A. The best way to get rid of your habit (which you have mentioned) is to strengthen your will-power. Unless you firmly decide not to indulge in this anymore, you will not be able to leave this habit.

Another thing which will help you is not to remain alone at any time. If you are in company of others you will not get a chance to do it.

The third thing is to concentrate more and more on religious things.

And the fourth is to adopt some hobby, like football, etc. which will provide you an outlet for energies of your body. But, for God's sake, never think of going to prostitutes. It will ruin you, not only in life-hereafter, but in this world also. Apart from financial ruin, you may get veneral diseases as syphilis and gonorrhoea which will affect the health of your children for generations to come; and "zina" (having sexual relations with a woman other than wife) is more sinful than masturbation.

Q55: DIVORCE DURING MONTHLY PERIOD

Is giving divorce to a woman during the period of Haidh and Nifas allowed if the woman has committed a great fault towards her husband?

A. She cannot be divorced during the period of Haidh (monthly period) or Nifas (Bleeding after delivery of child).

Q56: IS SINGING HARAM?

Is it Haram to listen to songs? Why? I have come to understand that this is because of music accompanying it. Is it, therefore, haram to listen to songs without the accompaniment of music? Is singing (without the aid of music) haram?

A. Music is defined in Shia Shariat as prolongation and vibration of sound with variations in pitch to such an extent that people may say that 'he/she is singing'. It is one of the great sins; and is Haram whether it be vocal or instrumental. To recite (or listen) to the words of a song, without any music, is permissible, provided it is not obscene and/or immoral.

Q57: HADITH ABOUT MUSIC

I heard many Khojas claiming this verse as hadith. "Al Ghinaao ashaddo minazzina' which mean. Songs, Music and so on are worse than Zinaa. Is this right? If it is, explain, with

details.

A. The correct hadith is الغناء رقية الزنا (Music is the magic of fornication). The so-called 'hadith' mentioned by you is not found in books of Ahadith.

Q58: WHY DO YOU FORBID GOOD THINGS OF LIFE

I am an American Shia Muslim. Prior to embracing Islam I was an avid lover of music. After entering the fold of Islam, I retained -although to a lesser degree - my love for that art. From some Muslims I have heard that all forms of music is haram; others told me that only some forms of it under certain circumstances and conditions are haram. I have been struggling vainly for the past 4 years to learn of the Islamic position regarding music. Aren't musical talents of musicians a gift from Allah to an artist? And didn't Allah say "do not forbid the beautiful things of this life'?" Will you, please, clarify this matter and quote sources from the Qur'an, Sunnah of the Prophet and Ahlul-Bait - permitting or forbidding music.

A. I am sending (by air mail) a book "Music And Its Affects" and the April, 1974, issue of the Light, from which you will know the view of the Shia Sheriat.

Now coming to the second part of your question: You know very well that a greater part of art consists of statues and paintings. But in Islam painting the likeness of a living thing and/or making its statue is Haram. And there is no difference of opinion on this subject among the various sects of Islam. Therefore, your "argument" by quoting the talents of the artists, I am afraid, has no basis at all.

Allah has not said "do not forbid the beautiful things of this life." Perhaps you wanted to quote Ayat 87 of Sura Al-Maidah. Its translation:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ لاَ تُحَرِّمُواْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ

اللّهُ لَكُمْ وَلاَ تَعْتَدُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

"*O ye who believe! Forbid not (to yourselves) the good things which Allah has made lawful for you; and do not transgress the limits. Verily, Allah loves not the transgressors"*. And the meaning of the word "طَيِّبَات"(good things) is explained in this very Ayat by the words *"which Allah has made lawful for you".*

So the question of allowing "the beautiful things of this life" does not arise at all. What has been allowed by Allah is good; what has been forbidden by Him is bad. And we have been warned not to transgress the limits imposed by the sheriat of Allah, because Allah does not love the transgressors.

Q59: GOING TO CINEMA

It is known that it is 'haram' to see Films,Why?

A. The Films is general have following features, any one of which is enough to make it a "Gunah-e-Kabira": (1) Vocal Music; (2) Instrumental Music; (3) Obscene Songs; (4) Obscene Scenes; and (5) Dance. Also, as is now accepted by many social workers, it teaches hooliganism and is a major factor in the ever-increasing rate of juvenile delinquency.

Q60: WHAT ABOUT SILENT MOVIES?

I have come to understand that it is because of the music accompanying them that films are forbidden in our Sheriat. Is it true? If so why is it haram to see silent movies?

A. As explained above, it is not only because of Music. There are other factors involved. If there is a "silent" film which is free from obscenity, dance and "crime-training" then it is not 'Haram'.

By the way, I have been told that even in educational films, there is always music in the background.

Q61: THE FILM "PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA"

Are we (i.e. Ithnasheris) allowed to see the film Pilgrimage to Mecca'?

A. The films in general have some features, anyone of which is enough to make it a 'Gunah-e-Kabira'. (See for detail. Question No. 59).

Then there is a principle of sheriat that a man should not go to a place which is generally used for Haram deeds even if he goes there for a perfectly Halal purpose. Because, first, the passer-by would not know his real intention and would think that he is going there for committing that sin. Secondly, he will become used to go to such places which is dangerous in itself. Thirdly, others by seeing him going there will be encouraged to follow his example.

Now, even if a perfectly safe film is being shown in a cinema, it is not good to go there. Apart from the above-mentioned three reasons, your children will think that there is nothing wrong in going to cinema; and thus you will be responsible to create in them a sinful habit.

Q62: CAN WE WATCH TELEVISION?

Can we watch the television?

A. The instrument, i.e. television is not haram, if you use it to see or hear things which shariat has allowed; but if you use it to hear music, songs, dances and obscene films, then it is haram.

Q63: WASTING OF TIME

Is wasting of time forbidden (Haram)? If not, then why many people say that we are not allowed to play those games; such as cards (without money), draughts etc. The reason, they say, is wasting of time?

A. Only such games and plays are allowed in Islam which builds or increases the strength of your body - like outdoor games.

So far as playing of cards is concerned, if a game is generally played for gambling purpose, then that game is 'Haram' even if you play it without gambling; because it will create a familiarity with such games and may even lead to the gambling stage.

Q64: IS ISLAM A BARBARIC RELIGION?

There is another question which arouses doubt in me, and I hope that you will clarify it. The question is: "Why is playing cards and chess Haram (forbidden)?" I have also heard that playing game in which one side is the victor and the other side the vanquished is also haram. Is this true? I don't know why our Sheriat forbids those things which we know are

necessities in this modem World. Without observing these things, we would be considered barbarians.

A. I am sending you two books 'Alcohol' and 'Gambling' which will provide the answer to your questions. So far as being considered barbarian is concerned, why are you so overcome by inferiority complex? Who is barbarian? Do you think those people are advanced and civilized who swap their wives, whose church marries two males, who kill hundreds of thousands of people on the pretext of establishing peace, whose women became naked in the packed halls in the name of art?

Q65: INTEREST?

I lend a sum, say Rs. 100/-, to a man and he, out of his own free will, promises to give me a gift of Rs. 101- in addition to the amount due. Is this haram?

A. It is haram, if it was spoken or understood before you gave him the loan. On the other hand, if nothing like this was spoken at that time, and at the time of repayment he gave you more of his own free will without your asking him in any way to do so, then it is allowed.

Q 66: LIFE INSURANCE?

Is Life Insurance allowed?

A. Yes.

Q67: TAKING PHOTO OF GHAIRMAHRAM

My hobby is photography and I undertake part-time work in photography, at wedding functions. Taking on a wedding photographic job means that I do have to take photographs of the ceremonies performed by the ladies which means that many times I, as a photographer, am the only male, person apart from a few others, amongst so many ladies. Now I would like the following clarifications:

1. *Is it allowed to take such photographs in the above circumstances?*
2. *Is it allowed if there are both males and females gathered together at a function and my prime purpose is just to take photographs?*
3. *Is it allowed to involve in such photography when one earns his living from it? And in case one does involve himself in this only for the purpose of earning his living, is his earning Halal?*

A. You may know the answers to all your questions from the following "Mas'ala of Ayatullah Al-Khui, printed in Tawdihul-Masail':

"Mas'ala 2448: "Man should not take photo of a 'Na-Mahram' woman, (i.e. a woman not within prohibited degree)."And if he recognizes a 'Na-Mahram' woman, then, according to 'Ihtiyat' he should not even look at her photograph".

There are hundreds of lawful ways of earning livelihood. Why should anyone select an unlawful way?

Q68: AMPUTATION OF A THIEF'S HAND

What are the conditions necessary for amputation of hand for theft in Islamic Sheriat? If cutting off the hand (wrist) is the punishment, why most of the countries (Egypt, Pakistan) relaxed that law? Is it correct?

A.

1. The thief must be adult, sane, and a free man;
2. he should not have taken it thinking that it is his own thing;
3. the alleged thief is not a joint owner of that thing;
4. the stolen thing was kept in a safe place (for example, under lock) and the thief did break into it either alone or with the help of others (if someone else broke the lock, and afterwards the thief entered into the place and took something from there, his hand will not be amputated);
5. the thing stolen is not the property of his son (if the father has stolen from his son, he will not be given that punishment of cutting the hand);
6. he takes it stealthily, not openly;
7. the value of the stolen thing reaches one-fourth Dinar of gold.

According to the Qur'an, the hand must be cut off. (In Shia Shariat, 'hand' here means 4 fingers of right hand).

It is really shameful and tragic for the Muslims not to follow the legal code of Islam. The harm of this negligence of Islamic law comes upon the Muslim. Allah and His Prophet are not harmed by our rebellion. Allah has said: *"And whosoever rejects faith then Allah is independent of the Universe."* (Qur'an 3: 97).

Q69: POLITICAL PRISONERS

Is there any such thing as political prisoner' in Islamic State? What I mean is, are we, under Islamic Law, allowed to put people into prison because of different political views?

A. No; though we Shias have a long history of spending our lives in prisons and torture-chambers because of our belief.

Q70: IS MAGIC ALLOWED?

Is it allowed in Islam to practice magic, witchcraft or astrology?

A. There are scores of Ahadith condemning these practices and likening such persons to a Kafir.

Q71: FOLLOWING MAGICIAN'S ADVICE

I have read in Kitabu cha Saumu that Uchawi (witchcraft) is Gunahe Kabira. Some time back a magician published the following for persons with certain stars or names starting with letter 'M' or names with certain number of letters; He says that for such a person for good luck,

(a) he recommends Olive-oil or palmoil;
(b) he recommends Rose or Jasmine perfume;
(c) he recommends Yellow or Near Yellow clothes.

Further, in times of trouble or illness or when meeting "big persons" one should keep in pocket in cotton wool a garlic boiled in coconut oil and should sleep with it under pillow and he should keep head tilted towards east and when sleeping also.

Furthermore he recommends travelling to west and north and avoiding east and south as far as possible.

I have tried these and they seem to work. To my knowledge none of the proposals constitute any 'Haram' thing. Is this "Uchawi' and thus haram? Should I stop this practice?

To my knowledge our religion actually encourages white and yellow clothes and also perfumes. I pray daily and take deep interest in Islam.

A. Now coming to your question about 'MAGIC', you better stop following such things. Of course, it is Sunnat to use perfume. But it will bring 'thawab' (Reward) only if it is used because the Prophet or Imam told you to do so. If you use it because a magician told you to do so, then it bring you no 'thawab' and you will be guilty of following a 'Magician'.

It is not possible to write more details on this subject at present. Suffice it to quote Hadhrat Ali (a.s.): "Anybody who listens to a man, is worshipping him. Now, if that speaker tells the words of God then this listener is worshipping God; and if the speaker is telling the words of Satan, then the listener is worshipping Satan."

Q72: WHAT ABOUT PALMISTRY, ISTIKHARAH, "SAAD" AND "NAHAS" DATES AND QAMAR-DAR-AQRAB?

What have you to say about Palmistry, Istikharah and Qur'anic Consultation in the light of Sheriat? Some Shias check up the dates and the year from calenders for "Saad", "Nahas" and "Qamar-Dar-Aqrab". "Navroz" comes on 'hare'. Have all these things any religious significance?

A. **Palmistry** is not recognized by the Sheriat. Some forms of Istikharah with Qur'an or prayers are prescribed by our Imams.
Nawroz: It has one special "Aamaal" after Zohr prayer. This date had coincided with 18th Zilhijja when the Prophet (s.a.w.) declared the Khilafat of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) in Khum. But unfortunately, the Irani Shias imported the Parsee rites and views which have no basis in Sheriat, and are, in fact, against Islamic character.
Dates: "Sa'd" and 'Nahs' are sometimes
"Qamar dar Aqrab". Many stars usually cluster together in such a way that they appear to form outlines of some pictures. There is 'Great Bear', 'Small Bear' etc. etc. Likewise, there is a group which form the picture of a scorpion ('Aqrab).

The moon (Qamar). while rotating around the earth passes from that group in 2½ days, that period is called "Qamar dar 'Aqrab" (Moon in the Scorpion).

According to traditions of our Imams, it is 'Makruh' (Not desirable) to recite Nikah or start journey in that period.

Dates: "Sa'd" and "Nahs' are sometimes based on some Ahadith; sometimes on historical events. The dates in which some good event took place for any Ma'sum is called "Sa'd" (auspicious). The dates in which some tragedy befell on them is called "Nahs" (inauspicious). But they all are governed by the general principle, mentioned in Ahadith, that if you want to do any work on a date or day which has been declared as 'Nahas', you should give some "Sadaqa" and then go ahead. In short, it is not meant to hinder your progress.

Q73: TAKING OUT BLOOD

I have also read that there are days (i.e. dates 14, 16, 30) when taking out the blood is beneficial to body, mind, etc. On other Islamic dates this is harmful. Now if we donate blood on "bad days', will it not be harmful?

A. These things are meant as a general guidance. They should not be taken as hard and fast rule. Every person has to decide for himself. Also, it will be a good thing to consult an

experienced doctor and to give some "Sadaqa" before donating the blood on such days.

Q74: IS 'EUTHANASIA- ALLOWED?

Does Islam allow euthanasia (i.e. making it easy for a sick person to die).

A. It is not allowed. If the patient commits it himself it is suicide; if some one else does so to him, it is murder.

Q75: MERCY KILLING?

If someone suffers from an incurable disease and he prefers to die rather than continue living a painful life; such a patient requests a doctor or physician to give him a medicine to end his life. Can the said doctor or physician acceed to such request?

A. No. If he accedes to such request and administers the medicine by his own hand, he will be guilty of murder If he gives the patient the medicine and the patient takes the medicine by his own hands, it will be suicide; and the doctor will be guilty of helping in the suicide.

Q76: DEFORMED BABIES

A few years ago, as a result of some medicines which women were taking to prevent pregnancy, many children were born with some of their limbs missing. Was it allowed to give such children some medicine to terminate their lives, so that they would not suffer as a result of their freak creation?

A. The reply of Question 75 applies here also.

Q77: A PATIENT KEPT ALIVE BY ARTIFICIAL EQUIPMENTS

If a patient is kept alive only with the help of some medical equipment like artificial kidney; and if the doctor is sure that the patient can never be cured, is it allowed for him to remove that equipment from the patient so that he may die and be saved from pain?

A. The detailed answer may be understood from the answer to the previous two questions.

Q.78: CANNIBALISM IN SOUTH AMERICA

I have sent you cuttings from 'Times' Newspaper on cannibalism that took place in South America after an aircrash. Are we allowed, according to Islamic Sheriat, to eat human flesh (dead or alive) when we are starving (to death) as that happened with the Christians who were involved in that crash? A Muslim here in UK told me that we can even kill a weak person amongst us and eat his flesh if we are stranded (as in the above case). Please, comment on this.

A. In the situation under reference it is allowed to eat the dead body, because saving human life is more important than saving a dead body. But by the same reason, nobody is allowed to kill another person to eat his flesh to save himself from starvation, because it will mean taking away a life.

Q79: ANIMAL SLAUGHTERED BY A JEW

Is it halal or haram for Muslims to purchase, and eat meat of any kind from a Jewish kosher market? Give me, please, Qur'anic verse about it. When are we allowed to eat the meat of an animal killed by a non-Muslim?

A. The conditions, by which the meat of a slaughtered animal becomes halal, are as follows: -

1) The person who slaughters the animal must be a Muslim. There is no exception to this rule.
2) It must be slaughtered by an instrument made of iron. In emergencies, sharp glass or other metals may be used.
3) At the time of slaughter, the face, stomach and legs of the animal must be facing towards Qibla, i.e., Kaaba or Mecca. Also, the person who is slaughtering should face towards Qibla. This rule may be relaxed when one does not know the direction of Qibla or it is difficult to make the animal face the Qibla.
4) At the time of slaughter, the name of "Allah" (e.g. the words "Bismillah") must be recited.
5) The animal, after the slaughter, must move its limbs; e.g. Moves its feet or tail a little.'It will prove that the animal died as a result of the slaughter, not before, it.
6) Blood should come out In usual quantity after the slaughter.

Now, in "Kosher" meats, conditions Nos. 1, 3 and 4 are not fulfilled. And the first condition has no escaping clause. As for ayat read the following
"forbidden to you are dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that over which has been invoked the name of other than Allah, and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death, and that which has been partly eaten by a wild animal! (unless you are able to slaughter it in due form), and that which has been sacrificed on stone (altars); Forbidden also is the division of meat by raffling with arrows; that is impiety". (Qur'an, 5:4).

The only time when you may be allowed to eat the meat Slaughtered by a non-Muslim, is when you are on verge of death because of starvation. and there is absolutely no other thing to eat and save your life. (So far. as fish is concerned, the only things necessary and that it must have "scales' and must die out of water. If these two conditions are fulfilled, you may eat it.)

Q80: IF MEAT BECOMES NAJIS

It is very difficult for us to know whether the meat or poultry we buy these days from butchery and other shops is 'Halal' or 'Haram' because (a) we don't know if the cattle or poultry is slaughtered according to the Islamic Principle, (b) we know that the scales are used for weighing pork also.

We know for certain that cattle and poultry is kept in cold storage together with the meat of other haram animals. Now in such situation, how can we continue to eat meat and poultry and at the same time ensure that it is halal. How about imported meat?

How can we be sure that these imported meat (fresh and tinned) are also halal? Please, we need a clear guidance on this: especially for our people who are now in Canada, where it is very difficult to know these things, in this connection, please enlighten us on the tinned fruits, breads, cakes, vegetables and other Chinese cooked food, fresh and tinned. How far can we use these?

A. I have been informed that in Tanzania, they follow the Islamic rules of slaughter.

If, after proper slaughter, the meat becomes Najis by coming into contact with Najis meat or scales, it may be made 'Tahir' (clean) by water in normal way. If meat is imported from a Muslim country, you may use without any doubt. The meat imported from non-Muslim

countries is Najis and Haram (unless you know that this particular meat which you are buying was "slaughtered according to Islamic rules.)

The only way for a Shia Ithnasheris in Canada etc. is to purchase goat, for example, in shares, and slaughter it properly.

The imported food, in which meat or animal fat is not used, may be used (unless you know that this particular food which you are buying is Najis.)

Q81: BAKE-N-TAKE SHOPS

We have so many bake-n-take shops here in U.K., and i have noticed so many of our brothers buying such items from there and they eat it. The shop is owned by Christians, and you know that fish, chicken and other meat which they use there is not halal. Can we buy potatoes, bean-crisps from that shop and eat it which is also cooked there?

A. The meat of an animal killed by a non-Muslim is Najis. If that meat is cooked in pot, that pot also becomes Najis because of the Najasat of the meat. If the potatoes and beans are cooked in that very pot, then they will be Najis. But, if they are cooked in another pot, then you may use them according to the Fatwa of Agha-e-Hakeem (r.a.).

Q82: WHICH FISH ARE HALAL?

What sort of fish is allowed to be eaten according to our Sheriat?

A. Only the fish having scales is Halal in Shia Sheriat

Q83: FISH BOUGHT FROM A NON-MUSLIM

Can we eat fish bought from a Christian?

A. The only condition for a fish (which has scales) to be edible is that it should die out of water. If it dies in water, it becomes Haram.

Now, if you, or any other Muslim has seen it dying out of water it is Halal for you. But if you find it dead, in possession of a non-Muslim then it is Haram, even if he says that it had died out of water.

Q84: TINNED MEAT:

Whether tinned meat of 'Halal' animals and chicken (but not slaughtered in accordance with our sheriat not halal) is permissible to eat? Does the rule change if you are not aware whether it was slaughtered in our way or not?

A. Tinned meat of halal animals and chicken which were not slaughtered in accordance with our sheriat, is not halal and not permissible to eat. You must be sure that it was slaughtered in Islamic way.

Q85: FAT OF SHEEP AND OXEN

Please explain to me this verse:-
“And unto those who were Jews forbade we every animal having undivided hoof, and of oxen and sheep forbide We unto them fat of both save what is upon their backs or the entrails or what is mixed with bones; this We recompensed them for their rebellion, and verily We are truthful". (Al-Anaam 1:47).

Does this mean that the above is not to be owed any more, i.e. It was only for the Jews at

the time?

A. Prophet Yakub (a.s.) had abstained from eating camel meat; and this continued in his clan. When Torah was given to Prophet Musa (as,), it confirmed this system for Bani Israel: They were allowed to eat "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud among the beasts"

By this definition; camel, ostrich etc. were forbidden to them as the do not have divided hoof. But in Islam, this restriction was lifted. This ayat refers to it is you have rightly understood.

Q86: WHICH BIRDS ARE HALAL?

What about a feathery hen or bird?

A. The birds having following characteristics are Haram:

a) Birds of prey, like hawk;
b) Birds which keep their wings straight longer than they beat them like Kits;
c) Birds which do have neither maw nor craw;
d) Birds whose egg is equal in circumference on both side (i.e- no like hen's egg).

The birds other than mentioned above are halal.

Q87: WORKING FOR A BREWERY

Is it not allowed in our religion of Islam to work as a clerk or driver in EA. Breweries. If no, give reasons from the Qur'an so as to convince me?

A. Yes, it is strictly forbidden in Islam to work in a brewery in any capacity. The reason is that all firms, companies and shops depend for their success on their employees. If they do not get employees, their business will collapse. So everyone working with a firm which does a 'Haram' business, helps, strengthens and sustains that business. It is to save Muslims from helping 'Haram' business to flourish that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) strictly forbade working in any capacity in such concerns; and he more specifically mentioned the business of liquor. He said:
"Allah has done 'Laanat' on liquor, and the man who sows the seed of grape or grain for this purpose, and the man who makes liquor, and the man who drinks it, and the man who serves it, and the man who sells it, and the man who buys it, and the man who transports it, and the man to whom it is transported".

To give you an example from recent history, Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian leader, launched a "non-co-operation movement" in 1920's in India. He called on the Indians not to co-operate or participate in anything connected with British Government, The students left the Government Schools, the teachers and civil servants resigned; the lawyers left the courts, and the traders boycotted the English goods. This movement continued for a long time. Of course, it did not at once topple the British rule in India. But in the long run it helped in getting the British out of India, firstly, by cultivating a feeling of 'national cause' in Indians, and secondly by showing the world how much the Indian public was against the British Rule.

We, the Muslims, are likewise in constant struggle against evil and Haram things; and, therefore, we are not allowed to help the evil in any way.

Q88: Making labels for breweries

I intend to start a cottage industry producing labels for the Tanzania Market. In the process of running this industry, there is likelihood of order coming from Tanzania Breweries Ltd.

for making their labels. As you already know Tanzania Breweries dealings are mainly liquor the orders will be for making labels for their liquor cartons, liquor bottles, etc. ?

Can you please advise me whether such business would be in order without contradicting our Sheriat?

The question of not accepting orders from them is out of question because once it is a registered industry and the only such industry in Tanzania, orders will have to be accepted or there will arise chaos,

A. It is my advice that you should not start this industry if you cannot refuse such orders.

Q89: MAKING TRAYS FOR BARMAN

If a barman wants a tray for use in sales of liquor, how can you refuse to sell when the article is displayed and price labelled?

A. It is 'haram' to sell anything to a person who, you know, wants to purchase it for Haram purpose. You may tell the barman frankly that you are not allowed by your religion to sell anything for the purpose of liquor.

Q90: IS MARUNGI HARAM?

Is Kat or Marungi Najis or Haram to eat or to sell? And what if someone eats Marungi for the purpose of making Ibadat whole night? Or if someone is in a journey and eats it to remain awake to protect himself from the robbers?

A. I have been told that Marungi, which is also called Miraa, creates intoxication. If it is so, then it is Haram to use. But as it is originally non-liquid, it will not be Najis. Selling a Haram thing (for a purpose which is Haram) is also Haram.

A Haram thing cannot be used on the pre-text that it would help in Ibadat. Remaining awake whole night for Ibadat is not Wajib. How can you commit a sin for the sake of a Sunnat Ibadat?

Q91: NARCOTIC DRUGS

When Islam forbade the use of narcotics (i.e. morphine, hashish), the Holy Qur'an used the word Khamr'. "Some say this means any intoxicant; others say it means only alcohol, I need historical reference (i.e. if there was a law as such which forbade the use of narcotics as there is for alcohol); also; please, find out for me if any of the ahadith' mention narcotics.

A. Opium, Hashish and other such narcotics are not included in "Khamr". The word "Khamr" is used for liquid intoxicant.

But there is no doubt whatsover that all narcotic drugs are Haram and unlawful. There are many Ahadith which clearly say that "Every intoxicant is Haram". These Ahadith are fomous and there is no need to give the references. You will find them in Wasael-us-Shia. Bihar-ul-Anwar and other books of Ahadith.

The second reason of their being Haram is that they harm the health of the user, and in Islam all such food and drink which are injurious to health are Haram.

Q92: IS YEAST HALAL?

I would really like to know if we Shias are allowed to eat yeast, because everything that is baked over here contains yeast; and I really don't know what that is. They use it in bread to make it rise.

A. There is no harm in using yeast.

Q93: PICKLES MADE BY NON-MUSLIMS

(a) *Is it true that we cannot take a cup of tea prepared by a Sikh, but we can take or eat pickles (Achar) prepared by Hindus?*
(b) *We get some pickles over here which is made by James Smith who I believe is a Christian, and is imported from India. Do you think it would be O.K. to eat these pickles?*

A.

(a) No. Both are Najis.
(b) So long as you do not know that the contents of that particular bottle have been touched by a non-Muslim, you may use it

Q94: IS CHEESE HARAM?

Is cheese halal or haram? Because cheese is made from bacon. On the paper or box they don't write whose fats they have used. It can be a haram or halal, we don't know.

A. Cheese is made from milk and is halal. It is not made of bacon or fat

Q95: DONATING BLOOD

Is it lawful to donate blood? Can blood be given to anybody?

A. According to the Fatwa of our Mujtahids, it is allowed to donate blood, provided there is no danger to the donor himself. But it must be with his own free consent. It is not allowed to take blood from the body of a dead Muslim. If the life of a Muslim depends on the donation of the blood, and if the donor has no danger to his own health, then as a matter of 'Ihtiyat' he must donate his blood.

Q96: HOW TO SECURE HAPPINESS?

How do we secure happiness of mind in Islamic concept?

A. Well, first you have to understand that material well-being does not bring happiness. If you have materialistic out-look, the more money or power you get the more your greed increases. So the materialistic outlook can never help you.

On the other hand, if you have faith in Allah, and believe that there is a Day of Reckoning, then you will strive hard, not for this transitory life, but for the life-hereafter, which is everlasting. Your actions, behaviour, character and dealings with the people will all be governed by this thought and belief. In this way, even if you are put to some troubles in this life, you will not be depressed by it. Because your eyes are onto a better and lasting reward in the life-hereafter.

Thus, when your out-look and character is conditioned by Islamic spirit, you will feel the Love of Allah in your every breath. And that is the Source of True Happiness.

Q97: "QITMEER"

Some times I see that on the letters (after the sender's name and address) the word "Qitmeer" is written. It is an Arabic word, and I don't know what it means. I asked someone and he said that it is the name of the dog of As-habul-Kahf. So, please, will you explain to me whether it is true or not and why they are writing, and also who are the people of As-habul-Kahf?

A. According to a hadith of Ameerul-Mumeneen (as.) it was the name of the dog of As-hab-ul-Kahf. You may read their story in the translation of the Qur'an (Sura Al-Kahf.) I have heard people saying that they write this name on a letter to ensure its safety; but I have not seen any hadith which mentions this.

Q98: MOURNING FOR THE MARTYRS OF KARBALA

On Ashura day (12/5/1965) an article of mine was published in the Standard Tanzania, D'Salaam, on the tragedy of Karbala. Mr. A. Robley of Arusha (a Qadiani) in a letter to editor protested that mourning for the dead was against the teaching of Islam. I sent a short reply and invited him to seek enlightenment by private correspondence. When he wrote a letter to me, I advised him to see Haji Ali Mohammad Jaffer Sheriff (Arusha) for detailed reply. After being shown the references etc. on this subject, he asked Haji Ali that the references should be given to him in writing. Hence the following letter, to which no reply was ever received. This letter is published now because it answers many questions often put before us:

A. Please refer to your conversation with Haji Ali about mourning of Martyrs of Karbala and your request that it should be recorded in writing.

First of all, let me emphasize that your whole approach to this matter is wrong. You are labouring under the presumption that everything to be lawful should be expressly allowed in Sheriat, while the dictum accepted in all the sects of Islam is that everything is lawful unless it is expressly forbidden. We cannot declare an act unlawful just on the ground that it was invented after the Prophet. Otherwise we shall have to bum all the books of traditions, commentaries of Qur'an, Fiqah of Imams Abu Hanifa, Shafii, Malik and Ibn Hanbal. Not only this, but we shall have to think whether it is not haram to have the Qur'an in our houses which has been divided in thirty parts and its alphabets marked by dots, and pronunciations made clear by adding fat'ha, kasra, and Dhamma etc. Again, we shall have to ponder whether it was lawful for the First Caliph and Third Caliph to unify the different qira'ats of Qur'an which were prevalent among the Companions of the Prophet.

Then we note that the Prophet never used paper notes in place of coins. Is it not haram to use currency notes for charity, building Mosques and other good deeds? It is alleged, though we say it is wrong, that the Prophet did not appoint anybody as his successor, and it is known that he never entrusted this duty to anybody else. What will be the legal status of those Khulafa who were elected by people to carry on the work of Prophet after the death of the Prophet?

I may here quote the universally accepted traditions of the Prophet that "Everything is allowed until it is forbidden" and "all things are allowed so long as you do not get any law for or against it" These traditions are accepted by Sunnis and Shias alike. But, of course, you are neither Sunni nor Shia; and you are not bound to accept anything recorded in their books. But, then, you have also no right to interfere in the internal matters of these Muslim sects.

Sheikh Islam, Allama Ibn Hajarul Asqalani, in his Sharh of Sahih Bukhari (Babul Iqtadae-bi-sunanirrasul) says: "Almost all Muslims divide Bid'at in five kinds (1) Wajib Bid'at, viz arranging Qur'an and preparing of Ilmul-Kalam against atheists and wrong religions and sects; (2) Sunnat Bid'at, e.g. writing books of religion, establishing Madressas and Musafirkhanas (3) Mubah Bid'at, e.g. different kinds of dishes of food (4) Makruh Bid'at, e.g. using good clothes and food so long as it does not reach the boundary of 'Israf' (extravagance); and (5) Haram Bid'at, e.g. revolt against Imam and everything which is against the Sheriat and about which there is established proof of its being haram."

Imam Shafii also has said, which has been recorded by Allama Asqalani in the same book 'Sharhe Sahih Bukhari', that 'Bid'at is of two kinds (a) Mahmudah (praiseworthy) and (b) Mudhmumah (Condemned); what is in accordance with Sunnat is Mahmudah and whatever is against Sunnat is Madhmumah".

You see that it is not enough to say that such and such thing was not in the days of the Prophet and then declare that it is unlawful, because there are some innovations which are Wajib, Sunnat, Mubah and Makruhand all these are lawful and Halal.

And, of course, there are some haram Bid'ats and we have to guard against every Bid'at of this type. One example of such Bid'at may be found in the traditions: "Whosoever innovates something and calls others to it or establishes a religion, certainly he goes out of Islam." I wonder what will be your reaction to this tradition and for such a Bid'at, because you have chosen to follow a religion which was invented 1300 years after the Prophet of Islam!

Still it is not my intention to leave you in darkness, and, therefore, I want to make it clear that actually mourning for Martyrs is not 'Bid'at (innovation) at all. Every history of Islam records that when the Prophet came to the corpse of his uncle, Hamza, he cried loudly and fainted. When he recovered from the faint, he again began crying and calling 'Hamza, O Hamza; O Uncle of the Prophet of God, O Defender of the Prophet; O Hamza, Lion of Allah and the Prophet'. It is called 'Nauha' in Arabic language. Not only this, but when the Prophet came back to Medina, he heard crying voices from every house of Medina for the Martyrs. Prophet did not forbid it. On the contrary, he sadly said, "But there are no women to weep for Hamza." People of Medina hurried back to their houses and asked their womenfolk to go to the house of Hamza and weep and cry for him. When the Prophet heard their crying voices and was told that they were weeping for Hamza, the Prophet was so happy that he said, "May Allah be pleased with you, with your children, and with the children of your children." Waqidi, in his history, records that after his incident, it became an established practice at Medina that whenever there was a death, the women cried first for Hamza and then for their dead relative.

I think you will now be satisfied that the practice of mourning for martyrs was established by Prophet himself, and the practice for mourning over Hamza was started in 3rd year of Hijra and the Prophet died in 11 A.H. and there is no record that he ever expressed his dislike against this practice. This is the answer to your query about mourning year after year.

So far as the particular case of imam Husain is concerned, I would like to quote some traditions and ayats to enlighten you:-

1. God says in Qur'an about Pharaoh and his army "neither the sky nor the earth wept for them and they were not given chance " (Ad-Dukhan).

Imam Muslim records in Tafsir of this Ayat, "When Husain was martyred, the Sky as well as the Earth wept on him and weepinq of the sky is its being red." (Sahih Muslim).

2. Some 50 years before the event of Karbala, the Prophet wept when he was told by the Angel that Husain would be killed by the army of Yezid in Karbala. Then Gabriel asked, "O Prophet of God, do you want me to give you some earth from his place of martyrdom?" The Prophet said,"Yes". Gabriel gave a handful of earth of Karbala and the Prophet began weeping uncontrollably. This tradition is recorded in Mishkat, Musnad Ahmed bin Hanbal, As-Sawaiqul-Muhriqa of Allama Ibn Hajar Makki and Sirrul Alamin of Imam Ghazali; and has been narrated by Imam Sha'abi, Imam Baihaqi, Imam Hakim and scroes of other traditionalists. The Prophet gave that earth to his wife, Ummul Mu'mineen, Umme Salma, and told her, "When you see this earth turned into blood, know that Husain has been martyred."

3. On the 10th Muharram, 61 A.H., Umme Salma was asleep in the afternoon when she saw the Prophet in her dream: He stood in tragic condition and his hair was dusty and disarranged and in his hand was a bottle full of blood. Umme Salma asked what it was. The Prophet said, "This is the blood of Husain and his companions. I was collecting it since this morning." Umme Salma woke up and ran towards the bottle which contained the earth of Karbala and saw red blood flowing from it. Then she cried and called her relatives and started mourning for Husain. This tradition is in Musnad of Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal, As-Sawaiqul-Muhriqa, Mishkatul Masabih, Tirmidhi and other books.

4. Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani writes in his book "Ghunyatut-Talebeen", Vol. II page 62; "70,000 angels came on the grave of Husain bin Ali after his martyrdom and they are weeping on him and will remain weeping upto the Day of Judgment."

5. **Matam (Beating of chests and Face):** It is recorded in Madarij-un-Nubuwwat (Vol. II, page 163) that when Shaitan announced a lie that the Prophet was killed (in the Battle of Uhud), the Hashimite women, including the Lady of Paradise - Fatima Zahra (a.s.) - came out weeping, beating their chests and faces.
   The same book also records that after the death of Prophet, some of the companions wept and cried so much that they lost their eyesight. This is also recorded in "Kitab Mathabata-Bis-Sunnah". (Page 119).

6. When the Second Caliph was informed of the death of ibne Muqrim, he put his hand to his head and cried. (Iqdul-Farid, Vol. II, page 4).

7. When Imam Zainul Abedeen came back from Damascus, and people of Madina were informed that the family of the Prophet was outside Medina, the Madinites rushed to meet them and they were weeping, beating their heads, chests and faces. It should be mentioned that the practice of Madinites is one of basic laws in some sects of Ahlus-Sunna.

Actually, the notion that mourning on Husain and his companions or weeping, crying, beating of chests, etc. is unlawful, is based on misinformation. People are misled by a tradition of Abdullah bin Umar, in which he alleges that the Prophet said that "dead man is punished if people weep for him." But wherever this tradition is recorded its correction and contradition by Ummul Mu'mineen, Ayesha is also recorded. When she was told of this alleged reporting of Abdullah bin Umar, she said that "May God forgive him, he did not tell

wrong (intentionally) but he has forgotten or is mistaken. The fact is that the Prophet passed by a cropse of a Jewess and people were crying for her. The Prophet said that they are weeping over her while she is punished."

You see the difference. The Prophet did not say that dead man is junished because of the action of weeping of people, and he could not have said it because Qur'an says, *"Nobody will carry weight of others"*, and it would be a gross injustice to punish the dead man for the action of he living relatives. What the Prophet meant was that a kafir cannot gain anything through the weeping of his relatives. Unfortunatley, misunderstanding of Abdullah bin Umar gave a chance to mischief mongers to make a stand against the family of the Prophet, and against the natural human feelings.

What makes me wonder is the fact that they do not pay any heed to he correction by Ummul Mu'meneen Ayesha which is recorded side by side in every book of tradition. Does it not show that these people who raise objection against the mourning of Imam Husain, do not want to seek the truth. They just want to further their own interest at the cost of Islamic truth. Of course, there may be some excesses in some places in the customs of mourning but it does not justify an all-out attack upon the basic principles of Islamic mourning.

These are only a few of the traditions of the Prophet regarding propriety of mourning on Husain. As you have asked to know custom and rulings of our Imams, I would like to quote here a few of the traditions of our Imams. Even now it is not necessary to quote from our own books because so many Sunni scholars believe in this cause and they have given those narrations in their own books.

(a) Mulla Ali Qari writes in his book "Sharhul Mishkat" Vol. V,page 604, that Imam Hasan (our second Imam and fifth Caliph of Sunnis) said, "Whosoever sheds one drop of tear from his eyes concerning us,Allah ta'ala will give him Jannat." Same tradition is recorded in "Yanabiul Mawaddah" (page 153).

(b) Majlises (gatherings to hear about events of Karbala) were established just after Karbala by our fourth Imam, Ali Ibn Husain ZainulAbedeen (as.) and was developed by our Sixth Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) and our eighth Imam, Ali bin Musa Ridha (a.s.).

Q99. BEATING THE CHEST

Could you please put more light on the question of 'Matam' (i.e. beating of chest and taking out the blood) in Muharram?

A. According to the Fatwa of Agha-e-Khoui, it is allowed if it does not do harm to the health of a person and is done within the limits of sheriat, i.e. Namaz and other Wajib things are not sacrificed for Matam.

Q100: KISSING THE SHABIH'S

Are we allowed to kiss the "Julus' which we take out in Muharram? After all they are made out of our own imagination

A. I do not understand what you mean by 'kissing the Julus'. 'Julus' in Urdu means procession. How do you kiss a procession?

If you mean 'Tazaia', 'Alam' and other such symbols, then the answer is 'yes'. The respect shown to these things is not for the paper, cloth or wood. It is for original tomb or Alam whose symbol or copy these things are.

Q101: PIGEONS ON SHABIH'S

What is the significance of keeping pigeons on Imam Husain's (a.s.) 'lash' on Ashura day?

A. It is the first time that I have heard of such a custom. I cannot understand why it is done. Frankly speaking, it is high time that the community-members sit down to scrutinize all the customs and rites, not only of 'Azadari' but of marriage and death also, with a view to remove all such things which have no basis in Sheriat.

Q102: MOURNING AND CHANCES OF "SHIFA'AT"?

Are there any better chances of Shifaat (Intercession) for the mourners of the heroes of Karbala? Is it only Mourning' which entitles one to Shifa'at or Mourning and following Islam?

A. Mourning on the tragedy of Karbala depends upon the true love of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.). And the true love of Ahlul-Bait is bound to lead a man on right path, i.e., following the path of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.).

Suppose someone asks you "Is it true that an apple a day keeps the doctor away?" And you say: "Yes".

Then he says: "Will it keep the doctor away even if one starved himself and did not take any food except that one apple a day? And you say: "No".

And then he retorts: "It means that the apple does not give us any strength at all and that proverb is absolutely wrong".

What will you say to such a man? The same is the position of your question.

Q103: MAJLIS IN WRONG PLACE

Can we hold the Imam Husain's Azadari (Majlis) in place which, we know, is used for drinking, cinemas and dances? I personally do not agree with it. But we have got one Mulla who said we can do that although we have got other facilities like private house.

A. No. Never do it. It will be a disrespect to Imam Husain (a.s.).

Q 104: PURPOSE OF NAZR MONEY

Can we use the salaam, panjatan and Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) money towards the building of Imambada?

A. This money is treated as 'Nazar' If the donor has given it for any specific purpose, then it must be used for that specific purpose. If he had no particular expenditure in mind, then it may be used, among other things, for Azadari and/or building of Imambara.

Q105: NAZAR

Are we allowed to use the "Hazrat Abbas" Alam and Salaam's money for religious purposes?

A. Yes, but you should do Niyaat that you are using it on behalf of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.). Here are the items for which such money may be used (in order of preference): -

(1) Azadari of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.)
(2) Helping needy Zawwar of Hazrat Abbas (a.s.)
(3) Any work of religious uplift and propagation.

Q 106: WHO CAN SIT ON MINBER?

I would like to know more about Minber-e-Rasui i.e. who is allowed to sit on it and recite majlises on it, and what are the conditions to sit on it?

A. Minber is,the copy of the minber of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and it can be used only for the preaching of religion, which includes the description of Fadhail (Greatness) and sufferings of the prophets and Imams (a.s.) and their true followers. The main purpose of such preaching is to exhort people to be sincere followers of Muhammad (s.a.w) and Aal-e-Muhammad (a.s.). The aim of the Majlises is not just to pass the time, meet friends, drink tea or sherbat and then go home without any improvement in the belief or character. Keeping it in view, you will appreciate that if a preacher himself does not follow the rules of sheriat how can he urge people to become good Muslims. It is very unfortunate that in this century, minber and Majlis have become just like business concerns; 'Zakirs' treat these institutions as their earning places. As a result, every Tom, Dick and Harry jumps upon the Minber, makes some demonstration of his oratory, tries to make people appreciate his 'art', fills his pocket and that's that. Nowadays the main aim of reciting Majlis is to get riches, or prestige in the community. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Raje-un.

Q107: ZAKIR WHO TELLS LIES

If you know that a certain man is speaking a pack of lies, backbiting others, doing "haram' deeds and taking Najis food, can such a man sit on the Minber of Rasul (s.a.w.) and recite Majlis?

A. Such a man should not be allowed to go on Minber.

Q 108: WAS BIBI ZAINAB EXCESSIVELY DISTRESSED ON THE EVE OF ASHURA?

We have seen a book. In this book it is written that when Bibi Zainab (a.s) came to know that all the companions and some of the relatives of Imam (a.s.) were going to be killed in Karbala, she started shrieking and crying. Imam Husain (a.s.) then tried to pacify her with exhortation: "What is all this, sister? I am afraid faith and endurance are over-powered by passion and devilish forces". Zainab (a.s.) replied: "How could she control herself when Imam Husain (a.s.) was killing himself with his own hands?" Imam (a.s.) answered that such was ALLAH'S WILL. This reply added much to Zainab (a.s.)'s distress and she went out of control due to excessive grief. Witnessing this Husain (a.s.) made a lengthy speech on patience and perseverance".

In this booklet the source of the above incidence was "Yakubi' and "Ibn-e-Jarir'. What I would like to know is if this incidence is authentic or not. If not, please supply us with an authentic one (including the source).

A. Before replying to your question, let me explain some thing about Ibn-e-Jarir and his book.

Ibn-e-Jarir (popularly known as Tabari', 'At-Tabri') is one of the Sunni historians of 4th century of Hijra. He has collected in his history narratives concerning any given subject without saying which narrative he himself prefers. He has written in his "Preface": "whatever news is in this book of mine (which I have narrated from our predecessors) which the reader thinks strange or the hearer deems absurd (because he finds no way of saying that it may be correct and gets no meaning in reality), then he should realize that

(that absurdity or falsity) has not come from us; it is from one or other of the narrators who narrated it to us. We have just written it as it was told us." (See page 7 of the Vol. 1).

Now coming to your question: It appears that your writer does not know Arabic and has never seen 'Tarikh' of Tabari. There was nothing wrong if Zainab (a.s.) became distressed in the night of Ashura. But Tabari (or more correctly, his narrator) added some sentences in between and writer of your booklet, because of his stark ignorance, has very badly twisted even those words. The result is a scene of such an 'absurdity' (to use the word of Tabari himself) that no man in his right senses can accept it.

For example:
Your booklet says: "What is all this, sister? I am afraid our faith and endurance are overpowered by our passion and devilish forces".

The words in Tabari are: "O sister, your forbearance be not taken away by Satan".

Your writer says: "Zainab replied how could she control herself when Imam Husain (a.s.) was killing himself with his own hands."

Tabari has written: "Zainab said, My father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Abu Abdillah, you are resigned to be killed? My soul be your ransom."

Note: It should be mentioned here that Shaikh Mufid (r.a.) has given this incidence in his book Al-Irshad, and this particular sentence is not therein. Sheikh Mufid's period was just after Tabari.

Your writer says: "Imam (a.s.) answered that such was Allah's will".

Tabari writes: "and (Imam) said, "If Qata (a bird) was left to itself a single night it could sleep." It was a proverb to show that there was no way out because of the enemies.

In view of so much distortion from the source, we can easily say that this episode, as recorded in your book, is NOT in Tabari's Tarikh at all.

So far as authenticity or otherwise of this episode is concerned, I have already quoted the words of Tabari in his preface. Some times, some people mislead their readers by quoting the names of great authors like Tabari or Majlisi without mentioning the fact that the books from which they are quoting (like Tarikh of Tabari or Biharul-Anwar of Majlisi) are only a collection of all available material on a given subject, and that its inclusion in those books does not make them authentic.

One more proof of the absurdity of this episode is that it goes on to say that Hazrat Zainab (a.s.) fainted and Imam (a.s.) threw water on her face in the night of Ashura!!

Q109: WHEN DID HUR JOIN IMAM HUSAIN (A.S.)?

In the same book, Hur (at Karbala) joined the force of Imam Husain (a.s.) on the day of Ashura (i.e., 10th Muharram) before the start of the battle. In every Muharram majlis I hear that Hur went over to Imam (a.s.)'s side on the night of Ashura.

A. Hur (a.s.) went to Imam Husain's side on the day of Ashura, not in the night of Ashura. It is found in all books of history, traditions and biographies. The story of his arrival the night before Ashura may be just an invention of some Zakirs.

Q110: WAS IMAM MARTYRED WHEN PRAYING?

Was Imam (a.s.) martyred when he was praying? Also, was it Sinan bin Anas of Najaf who killed Imam Husain (a.s.)? I always hear that it was Shumr who killed the Imam.

A. Imam Hasain (a.s.) was praying (in the meaning of Du'a) at the time of his martyrdom but not in the meaning of 'Salat'.

This "of Najaf" is very very amusing. It shows your author's ignorance, not only of Arabic but of history and related subject also.

Sinan bin Anas is described as نخعى (Nakha'i) i.e., of the tribe of Nakha. It seems that your writer had seen it somewhere and mistook it for نجفى (Najafi). He does not know that there was no place called Najaf for a long time after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.)!

Shimr (not 'Shumr') was in charge of those who participated in murdering the Imam (a.s.); he was second in command of the whole army at Karbala; and was exhorting the soldiers to behead Imam (a.s.) without delay, and in many narratives he is mentioned as the one who finally killed the Imam (a.s.); and this version is generally narrated in Majlises. But in other reports the name of Sinan is mentioned as the killer of the Imam (a.s.).

Q111. DID IMAM OFFER TO DO BAI'AT OF YAZID?

From the same book, it seems Amr bin Saad was more sympathetic in that he wanted to prevent bloodshed (than Yazid or Shumr). This can be seen from the following letter to Ibne Ziyad:-

"Allah has extinguished the fire of mischief. He has resolved the difference and created unity. He has set right the community's cause. Husain held out a promise to accept any of the three alternatives. Therein lies your as well as the community's welfare"

This letter was written after Imam Husain (a.s.) had offered 3 alternatives to latter: (1) Let him (a.s.) go back to the place he had come from; (2) Let him have his case decided by Yazid himself; (3) He may be allowed to go to a border place."

It seems that when Ibne Ziyad received the above letter, he accepted the proposal. But it was Shumr bin Zil Jaushan who opposed it and hence the latter went to Karbala.

Please confirm if the above incident is authetic. If not, give me an authentic account with source of reference.

A. For reply, let me quota Tabari himself:-

"Hani bin Thubait Hadhrami (one of the commanders of Ibn-e-Ziyad's army in Karbala) says that (Imam) Husain sent a message to Umar bin Saad to meet him at night between the two camps............Umar bin Saad came out with about 20 people and Husain came out with the equal number. When they met, Husain told his companions to stay at a distance and Umar bin Saad ordered his group likewise." (Hani says) Therefore, we stood so far from them that we could not hear their voices or their words. They talked a long time and then they went back to their camps with their companions. Then people started talking among themselves, on what those two people might have talked—but all was just guess work on the people's part; they suggested that Husain had told Umar bin Saad, "Let us go together to Yazid".................(Hani goes on saying) People started talking like this and they spread such rumours without anybody ever hearing anything like this or knowing what was

said."

After one more narrative, Tabari has narrated the words of Aqba bin Sam-aan (r.a.). He was a freed slave of Bibi Rabab; and was a sort of secretary of Imam Husain (a.s.); he was present in Karbala, fought bravely, was seriously wounded. But he survived and was taken prisoner and is one of the original sources of the narratives of the events of Karbala. Tabari quotes him as saying: -
"I accompanied Imam Husain (a.s.), went with him from Madina to Mecca, and from Mecca to Iraq. And I was never far from him till he was martyred. And he did not talk with anybody a single word, (neither in Madina nor in Mecca; neither in the way, nor in Iraq nor in the army) up to the day of his martyrdom, but I heard it. By God, he never even suggested to the **enemies any such thing which they are now propagating, like the thing which they suppose that he said that** he would put his hand in the hand of Yazid or that he was ready that they should take him to any border of the kingdom of Islam. But he only said. Leave me, so that I go away in this wide world, till we see what turn the situation takes."

After copying all these narratives, Tabari copies the letter of Umar bin Saad to Ibn-e-Ziyad which you have mentioned in your question. We know by the emphatic declaration of Aqba bin Sam-aan (r.a.) that imam never suggested any such thing. And the whole nature of the battle of Karbala shows that there never was any proposal of accepting the authority or order of Yazid.

The same tabari narrates in the same Tarikh that,on the day of Ashura,Imam Husain (a.s) gave a lecture before the army of Yazid,exhorting them not to indulge in blood-shed and not to kill the only surviving grandson of the Holy prophet. At the end of the khutba, he said; “O People, if you do not like me then let me return to the place of my safety.’’ Then Qais bin Ash’ath said to Husain: Why not submit to the order of your cousins (i.e Yazid and Bani Umayya), because they will not show you but what you like (they will not treat you except in a way which you will like) and no evil will reach you from them. Imam Husain said: “You are the brother of your brother (Muhammad bin Ash'ath, the killer of Hazrat Muslim bin Aquil).............. “No by God, I will not put my hands (into theirs) like honourless person, nor will I accept (them) as do the slaves.

"O Servants of Allah, "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord that you do not stone me' (Qur'an 44:20). *'I seek protection of my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant who believes not in the Day of Reckonning".* (Qur'an 40:27)"

Are these words those of a person who just 2 days ago had himself offered to submit to the order of Yazid? Remember what Aqba (r.a.) said and see how his statement is proved to be correct from all reliable evidence.

In view of such overwhelming evidence, one may only assume that Umar bin Saad wrote all those alternatives (without any basis, of course) just to please Ibn-e-Ziyad, perhaps in the hope that once Ibn-e-Ziyad postponed the battle and talk started, better results might follow. It is a mirror of the honesty of your writer that while he copies the letter of Umar bin Saad, he does not think it necessary to quote the rebuttal of Aqba (r.a.) or even Hani bin Thubait. A more charitable explanation may be that the poor fellow has never seen Tarikh of Tabari, and has used the name of Tabari to impress his readers.

I am not interested in the mental luxury of deciding whether Umar bin Saad was more sympathetic or not. All we care, and all that matters, is the fact that he was the commander of the army of Yazid in Karbala; and that when Allah gave him a chance to save himself

from Jahannam, he refused to grasp the opportunity and plunged into the Fire of Hell. That opportunity was given to him when Ibn-e-Ziyad wrote to him that if he was not ready to immediately wage the battle against Husain, he should hand over the command to Shimr. He did not. Instead, he sent the first arrow towards the camp of Imam Husain, asking people to be his witness before Yazid that his was the first arrow sent towards Imam Husain (as).

Q112: DID IMAM GET WATER?

My last enquiry on the above book is an incidence that took place after the army of Ibn Saad had prevented Imam (a.s.) from taking any water from the Euphrates. Imam (a.s.) sent Hazrat Abbas (a.s) to get water from the river. The latter succeeded (escorted with 30 horsemen) after some clashes with the enemy's forces.
Please confirm the authenticity of this incidence.

A. Let us look at this narrative in its context, (i am quoting the same Tabari except where otherwise mentioned).

Imam Husein (a.s.) reached Karbala on 2nd Muharram. Hur had already sent a messenger from the way to Ibne Ziyad about Imam Husain's arrival in Iraq and the direction of his progress. Hur remained with Imam Husain's group and they were now taking a way which went neither to Hijaz nor to Kufa. When they reached Karbala, the messenger of Ibne Ziyad came to Hur. The letter of Ibne Ziyad ordered Hur to "put Husain under extreme pressure as soon as my letter reaches you and my messenger meets you. Do not let Husain stay anywhere except in a desert without any protection (or fort) and **without any water**. And I have ordered my messenger to remain with you and not to leave you till he is able to report to me that you have enforced my order."

Note that water was to be denied to Imam Husain (a.s.) from the very beginning.

On 3rd Muharram, Umar bin Saad arrived with 4000 soldiers. The same day he sent a message to Imam (a.s.) asking him why he had come to Iraq. Imam's reply is mentioned in the letter of Ibn Saad to Ibne Ziyad: "When I camped near Husain, I sent a message to him. Husain said that "People of these places wrote to me and their messengers came to me requesting me to come here. So I came. Now if they do not like my coming here, and if their ideas have changed I will go away."

(Incidently, this was Imam Husain's stand to the last moment, as Aqba has so clearly declared)

It is reasonable to believe that this letter was sent on 4th Muharram (because the talk had occured on 3rd Muharram soon after the arrival of Ibne Saad in Karbala). Ibne Ziyad replied that Umar bin Saad should ask Imam Husain to submit to the order of Yazid - he and all his companions. "When this is done, then we will see what to do."

When Umar bin Saad got this reply, he said: "I was afraid that Ibne Ziyad would not accept the peaceful way (or, easy alternative).

Most probably this reply came on 5th Muharram.

And after this narrative, Tabari writes (without any other narrative in between):-
"There came a letter from Ibne Ziyad to Ibne Saad:-
"Stand between Husain and his companions and water (i.e. prevent Husain and his

companions from getting any water), and they should not taste a single drop of water, as was done with Uthman.

"So, Ibne Saad sent Amr bin Hajjaj with 500 horsemen; they came to the river bank and prevented Husain and his companions from getting a single drop. And it was done **three days before the martyrdom of Husain."**

After describing some more details of denying water to Imam Husain, Tabari goes on to say:-
"So when the thirst of Husain and his companions became intense, he called his brother Abbas and sent him, with 30 horsemen and 20 men on foot to the river (Then the same incidence is reported which you have mentioned in the question).

Now, this incidence could not have happened on 7th Muharram (i.e., 3 days before martyrdom), because the order to strictly deny water to Imam (a.s.) had come **soon after that letter of 5th Muharram.** And though Tabari does not say so clearly, Sheikh Mufid has used the words "in the wake of that letter (or 5th Muharram) arrived another letter, (i.e., the letter ordering denial of water).

"In the wake of that letter" can mean only one thing - that the 2nd letter also came on 5th Muharram.

And if water was strictly denied to Imam Husain (a.s.) on the 5th Muharram, their thirst could reach its highest point not later than 6th Muharram's evening. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the attempt of Hazrat Abbas to bring water was done not on 7th Muharram, but on 6th Muharram latest. In view of all the factors mentioned here, it Was obviously just a confusion on the part of the narrator to say that it occured three days before the martyrdom.

Q 113: WHERE WERE THE BODIES OF MARTYRS?

Where did the Yazid's army in Karbala find the bodies of martyrs after killing Imam Husain (a.s.). Because I have heard in many Majlises that these bodies were taken to the tent by Imam Husain (a.s.) on the day of Ashura.

A. Yes, Imam Husain (a.s.) had reserved a tent for the bodies of the martyrs. Naturally it would have been there after the martyrdom of Imam (a.s.).

Q114: WHEN WERE THE SONS OF MUSLIM MARTYRED?

In which Hijra' were the 2 sons of Muslim bin Aquil killed by Harith?

A. In 61 AH. about one year after the tragedy of Karbala.

Q115: MEANING OF "WAWAILAH"

There is a Mulla who says that to say "Wawailah" in Majlises or Matam is wrong, as it is the exclamation mark of the people of Jahannam'. Is it correct?

A. "Wail" literally means 'woe', 'grief. According to some Ahadith, it is metaphorically used for 'hell', just as "Nair" (Fire) is used in Qur'an and ahadith for 'hell'. The word "Wail" is very commonly used in its literal meaning, just as "Nair" is commonly used in meaning of fire. "Wail" like "Nair" is not a word specially coined for the hell.

When this word is used in exclamatory form "Wa Wailah" (or "Waili" or "Ya Waili") then its

only meaning is “Oh! The sorrow!", "Oh! The Grief!" (or "Oh! My Grief!"); and no other meaning is ever understood from such phrases, which are commonly used in Arabic language to express sorrow and mourning.

Hadrat Ummul-Banin says in one of her "marthiyas" of her son, Hadrat 'Abbas (a.s.):-

ويلى على شبلى امال براسه ضرب العمد

(Oh! My sorrow on my lion! his head was bent by a club-blow)

Q116: MAJLISES DELAYED FOR LATER DATES

Can we delay a Majlis of a Ma'sum's birthday or death anniversary, if it falls on a weekday and we postpone it upto Saturday?

A. There is no haram.

Q.117: DIRECTION FOR ZIYARA T

While reciting Ziyarat of a Masum, should we face towara Mecca or towards his town?

A. You may recite the Ziyarat of any Ma'sum either facing the town where he is buried or facing towards Mecca.
Of course, in some Ziyarats of Imam Husain (a.s.) it is specifically mentioned that it should be recited facing towards Karbala. Such Ziyarat should be recited, accordingly, facing towards Karbala